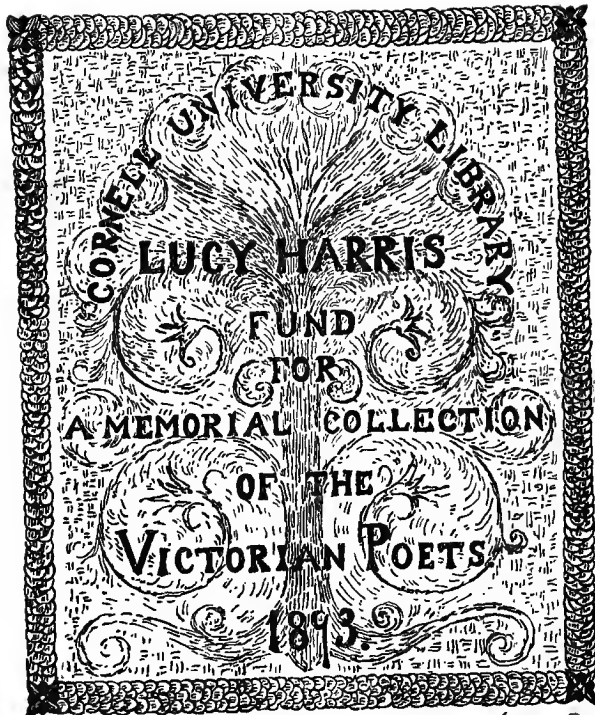


Purpose and Passion.

Kenningale Cook.

1870.



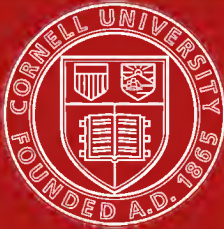
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PURPOSE AND PASSION.

REST not on waveless waters of content,  
But take the oar of energy, and row—  
Row whitherward the spirit lead, although  
The iceberg frown, and seas by storm be rent.

So shalt thou gain thy haven thro' the toil :  
Experience is not gat for nought ; thy soul  
Opes ampler tablet, whereon to enroll  
Teaching that advent-ages shall uncoil.

1866.

PURPOSE AND PASSION:

BEING

PYGMALION AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

KENINGALE ROBERT COOK, B.A.

*Δίκη δὲ ὀρθὴ τὸν πλημμελοῦντα ἐμμελῆ ποιεῖν.*

LONDON :

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D E

A. 173694

*TO THOSE WHOSE LIVES ARE NOBLE:*

*TO ALL WHOSE SONGS SOOTHE; WHOSE THOUGHTS SUGGEST;*

*WHOSE DEEDS AWAKEN:*

*TO THE MASTERS WHOSE GIFTS ADD DELIGHT TO LIFE;*

*TO THOSE WHOSE STRENGTH STRENGTHENS; WHOSE PATIENCE*

*TEACHES:*

*TO TRUE FRIENDS, KNOWN AND UNKNOWN;*

*THIS PRENTICE-WORK IS INSCRIBED. \**



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## P R E F A C E.

---

To hang up a suitable bush for a new and untried vintage is a task none of the easiest. A good wine may remain untasted for want of notice to the passer by; or the ivy may appear fresh and green, and the new wine prove to be harsh and sour.

The due disposing of colours and oils on a palette, and the cleansing and arrangement of a painter's brushes are necessary, though no pleasant, labours: the tuning a stringed instrument is a painful prelude to the melodious touch; and there may be an awkwardness in coming upon the stage, that, to the singer at least, if he have passion, shall be lost in the tide of the song: but the making a preface is more burthensome than these. There are so many words to say, to recipients who will so differently understand and misunderstand them; there is so little space for the saying of them; and, in such case as this, there is doubt whether they might not best be left unsaid, lest arrogant or foolish prose should add the last stroke of damnation to feeble and tottering verse. However, complaints are idle; and, instead of lamenting present toil, it

were well for me to recall the meed of that pleasanter work, which it is the proem's tedious part to usher into the wilderness, and away from me.

I have not been wholly without capable private criticism; as a result whereof, I am not flying on feathers and wax with intent or expectation to stagger the world: nor perhaps am I to be utterly confounded by adverse opinions. That this is far from being a matured effort, or a work of literary excellence, I know. I am acutely conscious of its many defects;—of weaknesses and obscurities, some perhaps now outgrown, but many clinging yet; of a want of order and crystallization, of deficiency both in energetic grasp and lyrical flow; of a foot that drags when it should be swift, and a throat husky instead of strong. Were I not also conscious of some faint gradual growth of power and clearness, the feeling would be even more painful than it is. Ever is hope endeavouring to illumine despair.

Upon one point I desire to insist, viz—that in the whole work there is nothing of actual auto-biography, whether any subject be unfolded under the mask of the third or first person. Let all characters or poems take their own responsibility; and readers, if they find it necessary, remember—“*C'étaient des scélérats qui parlaient; les poètes étaient innocents.*” Should the tone or style or views of any part of the work meet with individual sympathy, or the reverse; it is well. I might to-morrow take up the book, in a severely critical spirit, or perhaps in weary discord of mind, and deem the mood, of whomsoever I have imagined as uttering anything, to be unworthy of

expression ; or I might even find myself unable to enter therein, and, looking coldly upon it, detect in the execution harshness and weakness :—at another time might return part, if not all, of the old delight. Our impressions are more subjective than we deem or desire them, sometimes : save me from the criticisms of a tired mind ! To make these remarks more plain :—there are utterances in the work from which I have no desire to flinch ; if they are struck, I bleed ; but there are many which momentary sympathies, or the idea of harmony with a particular end have drawn in. Since these gradations, from the personal to the compound *ego* (if I may be allowed such definitions), and beyond these, up to absolute externals, are impossible to divide and label, I have made an attempt—possibly a futile and foolish one—to prevent a kind of misconception into which no reader, of breadth or insight, is in danger of falling. Thus is any poem subject to question :—whether its represented mood, embodied idea, or lighter fancy of song, by intelligent students be deemed worthy of expression, and whether such be well or ill expressed, or give pleasure to any. On the points of worthy or unworthy, noble or ignoble, work and workmanship, serious criticism will ever be welcome to me.

Of the sharper blows I am likely to receive I am already forewarned ; as to the foul or blind ones I am rather careless. One word to those to whom instinctive appreciation and love, of what is good and true in poetry and art, are not given ; and who are always the readiest, ignorantly, to arrogate to themselves the most mentally

exigent of all sciences,—criticism. Let these, when over-quick to take exception to what they deem obscurity or madness in moods of feeling which they may never experience, and which, consequently, awaken in their hearts no response, remember kindly that they need not irritate themselves by the study of them, but that speedy relief may be gained by the putting aside of any book that may offend. A newspaper is satisfied if it can get its thousands to listen to and forget it: a poem is content if it can find its one to know and love it.

This volume's sole claim is for the possession of a certain diversity. If joy be piped to children who cannot dance, they may at least turn aside, and to the dirges beat their breasts. If the sweetness of fable cloy, it is hoped historical husks may suit the practical teeth; and when we wax weary of the thought and strain, or sick of the ugliness and hopelessness of much of modern life, let us revel and rest awhile with the fairy and the Greek: or if our pain be sorer, let us seek that veiled *Pneuma* whose gift is yet manna and peace.

Those only who work in art,—masters or students—know the toil as well as the pleasure of it. Art is a goddess coy and hard to woo, being faultless and cold; and by hasty suppliants, or in any offhand way, unapproachable. Sweetest and weariest of mistresses is she; and many pillars, half-fire and half-cloud, both in and about us, come like a curtain before her perfect beauty, which grows faint as we grow weary; cruel and bitter, if we are faithless. Music will not always stimulate with her secret



joy, and lyrical flow is unlocked, alas, so rarely; when opened, so soon disturbed and distorted. Perhaps we have only the echoes and spray-drops here. Thought, too, must wait for experience as well as for intuition; and experience is a slow traveller, with dragging wheels, and borne on no flashing wing of advent.

Although even yet within the meshes of a negative and cowardly time, which poetry has been often unable, often unwilling to stir, we are now entering upon an epoch, which—to some who listen for the undercurrent of voices yet scarcely breathe—promises the dawn of the grandest transition-period of human history,—of a time when the soul shall take increase of power as the hand has done, and a strange and fearless psychical advance succeed and match the enormous strides of man's scientific and physical dominion; of a time when right shall be thought out again, and confirmed, and the wrongs that cry silently shall be heard.

Hence proceed many excitements tending to arouse from the calm-eyed contemplation of that art, with which, after some modern notions, progress has nothing to do. Is it hard to perceive that the artist's sole guiding-star—which, if not narrowed in clouded eyes, embraces all other lights—may shine with as lovely—perhaps with a more burning—lustre, over the violent wind-blown waves of the future, as upon the calm evening-stilled seas, or regretful rivers of the past? Wherever is bright life, there is beauty; and life points always, and eagerly, onwards,—breaking bonds that float and drift away afar into the ancient night. After all

that has been said, beauty has yet an aim and a purpose ; it is,—to make more beautiful. There would be less to fight about in the “gay science,” were there in existence a more comprehensive term than “beauty;”—one which, from the notion of a plant that bears mere pleasure for fruit, or that refines it to delight, should arise with a loftier head, and strive with its tendrils toward the mysterious high places, whence things noble and pure and sublime,—fortitudes, and faiths, and loves, shine down upon us as from afar, and in what broken rays it is permitted us to gather from the veiled storehouses of light. This we endeavour to express by the word “beauty;” and shall we gain by straitening the grasp of art to less than this? Following this star, we may leave “preaching heresy\*” on the right,

\* This phrase is ventured in preference to those of “didactic heresy,” “*l’hérésie d’enseignement*,” and “the great moral heresy,” which terms three poets, masters, each, of art-form, severally employ,—Poe, the first ; Baudelaire—doubtless following him—the second ; and Swinburne,—wont, though after a splendid manner, to cap, with a more projecting barb, every warring lance—the third. And for this reason ;—that the heresy seems but a slight one, and to lie solely in externals and detachables,—since there is, and ever must be, in true and great art, an innate and ideal didacticism. It is the hyper-consciousness of teaching, instead of the passion of faithful working ; and the protrusion of it to *the detriment* of the work, which is, or ought to be, heresy in art. But, to make deliberately un-didactic all art-work, and especially poetry, which, in comparison with other arts, has less of form, more of spirit, seems to be a graver art-fault than to make it a receptacle for cant, or overweigh it with moralizings, for, instead of a possibly-involved good, it is somewhat certain to run to the opposite extreme, of a teaching actually bad. If art is to afford anything beyond pretty china-ornaments, or brilliant mosaics, it must have vitality ; and such life will, of necessity, include the strife, the grasp and essence of its time, or of other eras with inward relation to its own ; so that even *art for art’s sake*, —“false French doctrine,” as Mazzini terms it—must be art for the sake of the

and the too placid lakes of mere souvenirs and sentiments on the left; and, steering toward the open sea, find delight in the crest of every wave, and the silver of every cloud. Yet, weariness comes sometimes, and half-heartedness; and the waves may be troubled, and join with the skies to obscure the star. We are grown more complex, and are thereby perplexed; we have apprehensions beyond our comprehensions. We have eaten of the fruit and drunken of the wine, and can no more return to the simple joys and the pastoral food. Dissecting ourselves, one another, and all our surroundings, we make base what is not base, and laud what is not praiseworthy, till our lives are marred and miserable, and we have lost the noble instinctive work, and unquestioning faith and pleasure of old. We have well-nigh reduced all things to

highest, the largest, the most noble, and most free ideas known. But, were this cry to be followed—narrowly, as it is meant—in an epoch of popular death-life, art itself would inevitably become so stagnant and noisome a pool, that after-ages of truth would shudder to drink of it. Man cannot dissociate himself from his fellows, and become irresponsible and self-inclusive, without being both *ἑαυτὸν τιμωρούμενος* and hurtful to others; neither can Art disbranch herself from kindred influences, and ambient life, and say,—I live for myself alone. But, on the other hand, if she go out of the way to ponderous exhortation and catechisms,—when her proper effluence is a flash, a gleam of unmeasurable suggestiveness, a ray caught in mid air, and set like a jewel, ever to burn;—she may well be deemed heretic, and an intruder into ground not her own. This is perhaps no place for entering upon such questions; but every plausible doctrine worries me, until, blindly or clearly, I have fought my own way through it. These critical bonds and straps may be very useful for discipline, but it must be a great ease to the soul to be unburthened of them, and to work its own way, instinctively, if so it may be, to the light,—doing its best and highest, loving the work most, and, rather than being hyper-conscious of teaching, leaving it to be naturally evolved.

negatives. The positive reaction, however, will come on, and the new buds are beginning just faintly to give promise above the smooth-shaven and trampled ground. The more we analyze, the sooner shall we begin to realize that there is a something remaining which we cannot dissect. On that, as on the ultimate atom, we may find place for the levers that move the worlds.

This, it is to be feared, is a most heterodox preface, for I have forgotten, and have to return, with somewhat of shamefacedness I must confess, to its subject,—the few grapes or bramble-berries I have made shift to gather, and the juice I am bold to offer, without a plate of silver, or a cup of gold.

This is but a first and immature harvest. Of what worth the next one may be, perhaps I know less than some of the few who shall taste this one. Meantime, farewell.

K. R. C.

## PYGMALION.



I HEAR the beating of the spray-white waves  
That toil and fret, and carp at the still shore  
As if in chiding at its passive rest :  
Low music-murmur gathers as they roll,  
In bidden journeyings endless as the world,  
Against the rounding sands and rocks weed-grown  
Of Cyprus—wreathen in her flowery dells—  
The sweetest island of the inward seas.

Those sacred waves, which, long dim years ago,  
While surging on—one mighty-heapèd tide,  
Their king, in the van—beheld him poise his crest  
And curling over pour his life in foam ;  
Whose snows the golden sunbeams wooingly  
Dissolved into warm life—a higher life  
Than had been his ; for, held in rapturous gaze,  
They saw long amber locks and lucent eyes  
Fresh from the sun-ray's fire, whose rosy tints  
Slow deepened to the ruby of a crown.

Then gradual rose to view a gleaming shape  
Beyond compare, for neither did the charms  
Of bright young sea-maid forms, sprent o'er with brine  
Or of the phosphor hues that are the life  
Of myriad atoms of the coral-groves,  
Or of the shimmering opals of the moon  
That gleam in vista pathways from afar  
And are the nightly beauty of the seas,  
Seem aught to their long gaze so vision-filled.

Thus Aphrodite rose ineffable,  
Born in more gracious hues than ever a ray  
Flashed on the toying feather of the wave  
That died in foam to give the life to her,—  
Sweet namesake daughter of the Cyprian seas.

In this fair summerland of joy there dwelt  
Pygmalion, chief of Amathusian tribes.  
Fastidious, artist-souled, he looked upon  
The Paphian damsels with no kindling eye,  
But, turning to an enshrined loveliness,  
He sought the gods, that they might breathe on it.  
He prayed great Heaven on zephyr wings to waft  
A roseate cloud of its ambrosia,  
Whose faintest breath of fragrance, overblowing,  
His labours might inspire, and further all  
His heart's aspirings to their hope's intent :

Then pouring his libation of crowned wine—  
Fruitage the richest of the island grape,  
Unmixed—in all humility he 'gan  
To model in crude clay the reflex form  
Of his ideal maid,—of her in whom  
Was shadowed forth the longing of a life.

The balmy airs of opening morning came  
From hyacinthine dells to grant his prayer ;  
Leaving their fragrant kisses of the buds,  
Yet drowsy in the dews, to fan his brow  
That fevered to deep flushes at the thought  
Of peerless charms and virgin loveliness ;  
Of carved cold curves—his work ; of gentler grace  
And blending harmonies of form, the gift  
Of gods.

A huge rock cloven in twain by storm  
And sundered in its midst a fathom breadth  
Made he his grot, whose restfulness of shade,  
And silence—whispering sweet imaginings—  
Might wreath his soul in meditative calm,  
As of cloaked eve that creeps along the vales,  
Heavy with incense of the oozy pines.

Above, a smilax cast its boughs around,  
Whose roots had found a little space of earth  
Wherefrom they might receive the dews of life ;  
And, blessing in return, its leafiest arms

Inwove shade canopies that stayed the glare  
Of noonday from the grot, yet could not hide  
From vagrant beams that through the grove found  
    way,  
Sheen-sprayed as stars, or as the gentle stream  
That dripping slenderly from the torn rock  
Unwound a silver thread adown one bank.  
The floor, moss-paved in green and brown, whose  
    tints  
Shewed softly warm against the marble blocks,  
On either hand led to the full broad day.

    In this fair grot Pygmalion's soul and work  
Daily advanced ; in larger ardour he,  
And it, the joy, in softer modelling  
Of curvèd lines, and mellow gracefulness.

    Ere gained his midnight tower the gazing sun,  
Trailing his thirtieth arching since that first  
That saw arise beginnings scarce conceived,  
His rays lit frontlet-wise a maiden brow  
That was but clay, but whose clear nobleness,  
Fused and imblent with soul divine, proclaimed  
The master work of an immortal mind.

    As day by day the eager sun advanced  
The labour of his hands with touch of fire,  
And, nightly, Cynthia's ever-fostering care



Filled full his soul with food for the to-morrow  
In silent poetry of her silver beams,  
There grew from out the pale-hued stateliness  
Of a pure marble slab a maiden form  
Of angel mien, a flower so lovely fair  
That mortal daughter fain would weep to reach  
Half such perfection. Nature's parent-care  
And art's child-aimings had no strife, but wrought  
In love together toward a faultless work.

Moons changed the crescent for the full round orb  
Then faded slowly to the darkening world :  
So rose and fell Pygmalion's hopes and fears ;  
Now borne upon the opening morn's fair breaths,  
Now beaten by the throbs of storm-fed winds.  
Thus waned and gathered all the soul in him,  
Until one morn, arising with soft flames  
That gave farewell unto the sister stars,  
Unveiled the grot of twilight, and let in  
Upon his heart the pulse of certain joy  
In its goal won and of a carven form  
Living a maiden life within the stone.

From the gray dawn long time had he bent eyes,  
As one that dreams, on his completed work,—  
Looking for happy resting now that all  
His labour had found cease. He searched about

His beating brain as if within some depth  
Far hidden, dark in vague inquietude,  
Lay calm and sweet content that should be his :—  
After the stir of joy cometh not peace ?  
The more he strove, was all the deeper hid  
That yearning sore whose wherefore knew he not ;  
And gathered cloud hung heavy o'er his soul.  
At length, as sunbeam crevice-wise, there stole  
A little ray, a little timid ray  
Of hope amid the tangles of his mind :  
As lightning faded it, and left a void  
E'en darker than before ; then did he cry  
Yet scarce save to his heart's own answering—  
“ Abysmal cloud, soul-drowning Lethe come,  
And quench the lurid visions of my mind ;  
Let me forget this lonesomeness, ere come  
Cold death, and my tranced eyes for ever see  
Nought save the marble with its pallid gaze,  
While cruel winter winds for ever blow  
Their sere and dying leaves about my heart.  
Yet, must I leave these joyous bird-loved haunts,  
The blossom-wreathen shades I know so well,  
The upland-threading paths and fragrant vales  
Where I have lived my life—a happy life  
Till now ? Be pitiful, ye gods, and bless.”  
Then shot there o'er his soul's bewilderment

A flashing thought, that as an entering shaft  
Made a strong quiver of its flight therein ;  
Bearing this message on its sheeny wings—  
“ Is aught too daring with the gods for aid ? ”  
Thence taking heart ; and raising reverent eyes  
To heaven’s high temple-arch of silent blue,  
He thus began a pæan and a prayer—  
    “ Immortal founts of ecstasy divine,  
Eternal harmonies whose echo fills  
The pulses of my soul—invoked again—  
Pour forth the sacred fragrance of your breath.  
One-minded Nature, Parent Earth, and Sea—  
Whose myriad dimpling into foam afar  
Bears soothing music to the heart—give aid !  
And thou, infinity of filmy arms,  
Who clothest all in mantle of pale-blue,  
Soft-fringed in the faint morn with sleepy gray,  
And evening-browed with bands of burnished gold ;  
Who makest all things joyous, yet anon  
Dost draw a shrouding over things create  
Of tissue vapours ashen-hued and chill ;  
Who hast lain heavy on my heart of late  
Like to the darksome cloud that clingeth close  
To the black bosom of the mountain lake ;  
Again receive my vows, receive again  
The surging incense of a hymnèd prayer.

And O ye breezes, trembling lutes bring forth,  
And on your mounting wings my song upraise ;  
And may its melodies of strong desire,  
Rolling in waves from height to height, call down  
A silver stream to pierce the darkening folds  
Of sorrow's heavy coil. And ye grand orbs  
Of nature-pasturing light, inscrutable,  
To this my pleading earnestness vouchsafe  
The symphony of aid ye gave of old.  
Ye have been gracious : grant, I pray, a hap  
More gracious still to a more daring plea.  
As parching lands are languorous for the dews  
That morning fails not of, so burns in me  
Flame of a weary drouth of loneliness.  
It is no evil thing I fain would ask ;  
I would but rob ye of a maiden's soul  
That yet repositeth, mystic, uncreate,  
Waiting the advent of its aureate dawn.  
O for keen surge of light to pierce the clouds  
That mask in mist and veil to mortal sight  
The dazzling essence of the life divine.  
O for the power that through the heaving foam  
Kindled the light of Aphrodite's brows.  
Lend ear unto the cryings of my heart  
For one flashed answer from the inner depth  
Of those o'er tranquil eyes so frosty-cold :

O shed the life of glowing heaven around."

Broad-bosomèd he stood, the while o'erflowed  
Thus from his lips the tumults of his soul  
Whose tide was hope. Nor tarried issue long.  
A gentle voice mid beats of angel wings  
Low whispered in his ear harmoniously  
As 'twere soft breaths that warm about his neck  
Curled eddywise—"The gods have heard thy  
prayer  
And ether vibrant feels the answering nod,  
By me the goddess of the rainbow sheen  
Now earthward borne in roseate lights that mock  
The dark-fleeced clouds. Do thou but press a kiss  
Upon the carven lips that never yet  
Have glowed in answering sweetness; and in faith  
Await the full completion of the boon."  
Thus softly sweet the omen and 'twas gone.

His arms he wound—ah! not reluctantly—  
About the chasteness of the marble pale;  
Close pressing on the lips yet unawaked  
A fervent touch of fire, the while his soul  
Its spirit-whispered hope gave forth in throbs.  
And not for nought, for through the movèd air  
There rushed swift ardours at the touch; heaven-bid

Ambrosial fragrance thrilled around the pair,  
The man and marble maid ; and fountain-loosed  
The frozen life-spring of her heart became  
A river billowing crimson foam to swell  
Full many a blue-tinged marble vein with life.  
The chisel-mounded snows of her smooth breast  
Were nigh dissolved into a silver mist,  
And this took shape of life ; the new-born form  
Heaved with faint flutter as the beating wings  
Of fledgling dovelet trembling on the brink  
Of its leaf-cradled nest, when it essays  
To prove its wondrous baby-strength and leave  
Its birth-right comfort for a bliss unknown.  
So did his longing prayers and heaven-taught kiss  
Woo softly her to pass from heaven to earth.

She comes : the ivory-marble of her eyes  
Softening to Psyche's hidden ether-dews  
Reveals the influence of the unveiled soul,  
And a full stream of living light strikes forth.  
The lips half ope, disparting into pearls  
Rose-girt—spring buds scarce blown but ripely-hued  
By contrast of the pearls in their caress.  
Loosed from the stone's embracery her hair  
Becomes instinct through shower of feather-gold  
With light and shade the warm life ripples o'er.

Her graceful neck uprears above a breast  
Whose cruel ice-chains fail, unloosening  
Beneath the radiance of the glowing spring ;  
And Eros with Anteros breathe their sweets  
Of nurture-fragrance on the bud-like soul.  
Soft vernal airs blow from the smilax leaves  
To mix with sighings of her perfect mouth ;  
And waft the pæans of his joy to heaven  
Whence came the first gray dawning of his hopes.

Once was a twining weft and woof of toil  
Inwoven sore unquietly about  
The vision all imperfect and obscure,  
But now from opened skies had floated out  
Sweet rest and radiance of the afterdream.  
As if one fared along a wooded vale  
Winding indented waves amid the hills,  
And rocky oft, with often weary foot ;  
And then should rest upon the mossy fringe  
That is the margent of a drowsy brook  
Musing in murmurs on its crystal way.  
Here could the poet-soul have peace and sing  
Its sweetest lullaby from dream to dream,  
Nought stepping in to mar, or weave a sigh  
For fear that ever change or cloy should come.  
Then was the morning with its chills and doubts,  
But now the glory of the noon sun,

Full countervail of happiness for all.

The light played o'er her brow and on her hair  
Within whose tremors roved his finger tips,  
Worthy the golden meed, and hid therein  
As tendrils tangling in the grape-clusters.  
She was his vine, for none but he had watched  
And waited for the fruit yet hidden close  
In the cold marble rock ; and 'twas his now,  
A granted dream—the rich red grape her lips,  
The velvet bloom yet undisturbed by aught  
Save the one touch that called it forth to life  
And ripened it unto that perfect fruit  
Whose wine is love. This is the summer of dream :  
His arms are yearning through each aching pulse  
To tend toward her white neck, and in embrace  
Girdle the curves that are grown yielding now.  
The gods have given a soul ; amid long hair,  
That flows down darkly as to hide her eyes,  
Her beauteous head she bends ; and drooping as  
A wearied dove, she falls upon his breast  
In crimson modesty and maiden tears.  
A torrent's whirl is bosomed in his soul,  
His eyes they weep with love, and kisses fall  
Upon her for his tears.

O happy tears



That mark the dawning of a gracious light  
And life of love that are unfolding, each,  
In beauteousness, and growing all divine,  
Full as the perfect music of a choir.  
She knows but happiness; and, blowing on him,  
Beareth his soul beyond the worlds her breath.  
All things chaunt harmony; twin unison  
Hath made all sweet for love of him and her;  
And he, creator by the heavenly aid,  
Is the more blessed of the sacred twain.

*May, 1866.*

## L U R A.

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### I.

I SEE her, oh so dimly, far away,  
Like earliest break of a cloud-frighted day ;  
As light that glances under mists, she gleams,—  
Like moss-fringed silver of hid mountain streams.  
The winds do woo her, breathing unaware,  
Weaving, unweaving, all about her hair ;  
They fill their hearts of her and come to me  
With burning whispers of how fair she be.  
Is there one whisper that they waft from her,  
Or is my heart o'erquick interpreter  
Of what it would ? Ah, how her lips beguile !  
Or is it the glimmering half-bud of a smile ?  
Is there imploring in her look and tone ?  
O is there love, for I am drear, alone ?  
Long lingering hangs the morn-mist like a veil  
Between mine eyes and hers lest these exhale  
Such azure flame and dewy overflow  
The one is vain to soothe the other's blow.

## II.

Like a dove's is her little full breast,  
 And her face like the faces of singers that rest  
 In the pause of a music that drinks of their souls.  
 But the phantom of mist comes between us and rolls,  
 With a finger as pale as the dew on the hills,  
 A dim veiling to hide her. Her fires how it stills!  
 And it likens her brows to an idyl-calm lea  
 Oval-shapen adown to a lyric of sea.  
 O but say, ye wan films, is't a sigh that she heaves?  
 O that flowers of her eyes were unburthened of  
     leaves,  
 That their soul were unlidded for stars therein  
     drowned  
 To uprise like a dawn from the sea-depth profound;  
 But to fill me with joy though I die growing blind;—  
 'Tis a death come already the life that I find.  
 Is it never she draweth anigh, for this fate  
 Is half-fever half-sleep in inquietude's hate?  
 Though mine eyes should be darkened and sleep  
     shake away,  
 Can I not have her close who is hid in the gray?

## III.

Within a stygian tangle-web of mist  
 Wander I wearily whitherward I list,

This way and that, without or hope or aim  
As fancy veers and this enkindling flame.  
O, to come by her, what to do or say ?  
Will she look on me who am earth and clay ?  
O that were mine to take the highest grace,  
The lyric fervour of Apollo's face.  
But if I had no music in my soul  
The charm would fade and chrisn-light unroll,—  
The rapture failing in the faint song-sound,  
The olden deadness glooming all around.  
Then would I fain seek, for 'twere weary thus,  
The grapelike beauty of Antinoüs ;  
For dreaming, sure, must needs be exquisite  
Beneath such drowsy eyelids' shed roselight,  
And in the bloom of that full-budded mouth  
Must lie all raptures of the golden south.  
Beneath such mantle would she pity me,  
And calm with love one tossed so wearily ?

## IV.

In the curve of a nostril like shell the wind blows,  
In the carven cold ear and the mouth like a rose,  
In the curl of her lips is there anger and scorn,  
Is there mockery to make all my dreaming forlorn ?  
O pink flush of her cheeks, art thou hatred or love ?  
O ye lights of her eyes, turn ye only above ?

To my song ere it faint O for once on the string  
 But to hear the swift rush of her hand's answering!  
 O ye streams of long hair, is it idle ye blow  
 Around lights of her temples whilst I am in woe?  
 O that she were unquiet as I, ye would creep  
 In a wailing about her to stay her from sleep;  
 But the wind breathes so low and ye answer its ease  
 Like a lull and faint flowing of calm melodies.  
 With a flower intertwined the white flower of her  
     hand  
 Is at rest till the sea-wind spreads wing o'er the land;  
 Then a stir, like the shake of a leaflet at eve,  
 When the winds 'gin to hush and the nightingales  
     grieve,  
 Moveth idly the fingers that sleep like her heart  
 Without flutter of passion or veins in a smart.  
 But the bend of her neck it is drooped!—not for me;  
 'Tis to see the morn-lights as they play on the sea.

## V.

Go to her, O sunlight, and say "Why has death  
 Set a magic upon thee to chill thy sweet breath?"  
 O go smite her white bosom, O fear not to pain;  
 She is cold, even cold where thy fingers have lain.  
 O ye bodies of wavelets whose hearts are a fire,  
 Will ye dance up the sand with the voice of a lyre,

Will ye fret at her feet, saying, " Words cannot tell  
Of the love that is thine ; 'tis for us to foretell,  
From our hearts that know all, that are never at  
rest,  
Of the pain of his passion, the flame of his breast ? "

## VI.

To be bathed by her eyes,—that were sweet, but, ah  
me,  
Is it other she looks for o'er deserts of sea ?  
Far across the dividing of seas is there one  
Who shall strike on her harp-strings and draw the  
right tone ;  
When the lips that are cold and the listless pale  
hands  
Shall arise from their slumber and quiver like  
strands  
Of the weed in the wash of the sea that is borne  
From the ice of the north to the east of the morn ?  
Were I drenched in the sphere of her light and set  
close  
To the breaths of her lips, am I nearer by those  
To the balm of her smiles, or shall thrills of her  
throat  
Feel the wines of her blood gather fire as they  
float

Through the heart to the lips with a rush like the  
sea ?

To be near, to be far ;—is it either, ah me,  
That may strike to her soul but a spark of my strife,  
That shall burn but a word on the scroll of her  
life ?

## VII.

O a shadowlike goddess with dew in her veins,—  
Once she curled up her lips as in scorn of my pains,  
But as faint as far distance her roses have grown,  
And no smile is upon her ; her heart hath she thrown  
Far away in the sea-wave, and kisses of air  
Loosen each of her tresses, and Zephyr swoons there  
Who shall scatter with laughter so soon as he wakes  
All the gold of her locks strand by strand to the  
flakes

Of the foam that is eager for pasture. Her eyes  
Raise a music of strife in the domes of the skies  
As to which is the meeter for guerdon of stars.  
O the door of her lips then a goddess unbars  
And the roses are parted ; the dawn hath the best,  
But there falls a red petal that stays in the west  
For the glory of gardens that maidens may know  
What the charm of her was who hath wrought me  
this woe.

## VIII.

She is gone, she is gone, there is void where she lay,  
And a cloud of dim purple rains tears on the day :  
Yet the dream of her smiles gilds a crown for the  
hours

As the grave of the sun the west heaven embowers ;  
And her lips kiss the waves into glimmer of rose  
With a touch on each faint crest of foam as it flows.  
With the Queen Moon she comes her white weeds  
as she trails

Over ridges and hollows of haunted dim vales ;  
And wherever men's hearts 'gin to fail with a sigh  
'Tis for love of that maiden who somewhere is nigh.  
In the shrine of the woodland long shadows cross  
spears

And dark maidens are jealous ; she gloats on their  
tears

And she shakes them o'er leaves just asleep for the  
night

Till they waken and rustle in tremour of fright,  
With so eerie a moan that men's souls that go by  
Shake and quiver like aspens beneath a cold sky.

## IX.

Ah, the dream of her brings her again, she is near  
With a kiss like a dove's and a flutter like fear ;



For a magic flows from her that fills all the air  
And unsatisfied longings are querulous there,  
But a glamour flows over that hides all the pain  
And a dew weaves a veil o'er each soul she doth gain.  
O insatiate sweetness, shall none then appease,  
Wilt thou cage all the heart for thy mockings to  
tease ?

Wilt thou soothe with thy tresses and deep in thine  
eyes

Open wells of soul-sleepings, awaken with sighs  
But to drench with fresh fire till the heart overflows  
In a red flame of hunger, O maiden of woes ?  
Wilt thou cool with a balm-wind and blow such  
sweet breath

One would breathe in it, drink of it even to death ?  
But thy lips they grow wanner, thy smiles fade and  
flee

As they fled from thy lover who sang by the sea.  
Thou art fainting,—not dying?—O yield but thy  
hand,

Let me clasp it and hold thee close here on the sand,  
With a wind breathing round with a song of thy  
snares

But so sweet, oh so sweet, it regoldens thy hairs,  
And so full of a fire thy life ceases to wane :  
O but hold me, thy life drinketh all mine again.

## X.

O thou wearisome goddess, thy bitter-wove strands  
Mesh a magic about me. The wave of thy hands  
Blows as cool as a fan in sunned air, but beneath  
Is a dire fleck of flame like a sword-point in sheath.  
Thou art cold when I burn ; if I weary, thy feet,  
With a gliding that guileth the eyes and makes fleet  
The hot pulses of breath, come to meet me half-way,  
Lest I leave thee and wander out into the day.  
And the robes of thy twilights they brighten with  
birds

All whose songs wind about in unspeakable words,  
And they flow and are dying, they rise and are faint  
Till the heart is ensnarèd again, and complaint,  
Lured away into loving in spite of all woes,  
Waxes weaker and wilder as ecstasy grows ;  
Till a sob comes at last and the skies flutter o'er  
With a sough like the ebbing of waves on the shore.  
O the lure of thy mystery, the lyre of thy heart !  
An there be no escape, let me die where thou art.

## A REVERIE AT NIGHT.

~~~~~  
*"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades,  
Or loosen the bands of Orion?"—JOB.*

*"Thou hast made man a little lower than the angels."—DAVID.*  
~~~~~

HERMANN.

WHERE be thy dreams, Conrado? Seemest  
thou  
As if thou wander'dst elsewhere than here,  
Stretching thy thoughts along the misty slopes.  
It is a mighty down and in its shroud  
Of darkening forest makes the stars seem faint,  
They are so small and white to its great gloom.

CONRADO.

My soul had wandered; being so seldom fed  
By such vast scene as this. If I were told  
That this place had a being of its own,  
Some vast identity, how could I rend  
All mystery away so as to assure  
It were not so? This seemed to whisper me,—



The winter ofttimes cold on all thy saps  
But to redeem them with a gain of strength ;  
The spring-tide ever set within thine heart,  
But deep down oft that few discover it.  
Lift up thy head that hangs so wearily  
O thou defamed, dethroned one, soiled with mire  
Cast by thy children's alien sanctities,  
Who brand thee charge of some great evil god  
That drives the other into shifts to avert  
Thy utter failure and eternal doom :  
O weak yet strong, O goddess from the sea,  
Rising the brighter for the filmy foam !  
Great Harp God loves to list, wherefrom is rolled,  
From small quick tremble of the weakest strings  
Up to the clear song-sounds of ampler souls,  
Heaven's morning music. O wild-throbbing lyre  
Upon whose sinews his great spirit pours,  
Made manifest in myriad influence  
Of morns and eves and stars and nature's songs,  
Gleams and large hopes and loves and all the tunes  
And mysteries whereof faint breathings blow  
Upon the least of us, as swift they pass  
Along the wind-swept heavens at His word.  
O child Humanity, God hath thee still  
Safe in the covert of his inmost soul,  
Where from the cruel nursing-mother evil

Thou may'st have hiding and refresh thy strength.  
Each new bright spray that strives to blossom forth  
From out the bondage of thy smallest bud  
Is a fresh pulse of life, and strikes such joy  
The soul of the infinite straightway answers it,  
And to the stars sends it re-echoing  
Till every dewdrop knows his brother's tears.  
O loved Humanity, of all men's hopes,  
Sweet mother and sweet child, have joy,  
Grow strong and gather closer all thy sons."

HERMANN.

O'erflow of this were overkeen to bear :  
The stars 'speak silence,' let thy soul accord,  
And toward thy pulses may the evening's hand  
Soft steal a cool calm touch to bring thee sleep.  
Lean on me, brother ; let thy burning dreams  
Glean soothèd ease ; filled flowing-full of it  
Long shadows lie around. Our work is given,  
These thoughts shall blow upon us in our need.

## B A D O U R.

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**L**ONG line of men was curled along the plain  
In splendid pageantry, and Baghdàd's walls  
Echoed the answer to our trumpet clang  
As we gat into view. At early morn  
Our cavalcade had left the crowded gates,—  
An arrow's flight of purple and red gold.  
Our well-loved Prince had bade us forth to meet  
The Caliph, who on journey through the realm  
To usward came in wish once more to see  
The olden palace where his fathers dwelt ;  
And with acclaim and ringing welcome each  
Gave greeting to the other royally.

One of a throng of gleaming spears I rode,  
But silently, musing my father's deeds  
Entwined with glories of the caliphate.  
A silver sister to our golden line,  
The Tigris lay beside the road along,  
Unwinding ever through the weary plain

Cool coils of breathe fragrance on the air,  
And dower of stately palm-trees overhead.  
Amid the gleam of steel and gold, whose ring  
Was intermixed with eddying laughter clouds,  
A scarce six ranks ahead I marked a face  
Clothed in more perfect quiet than the skies.  
Just out of line he rode, a seemly knight  
Clad in a spotless velvet of purple,  
And girded with a cincture silver-wove.  
His plume hung wearily away from us  
And leaning to the river and the palms :  
He spoke to none, nor looked around at all,  
But was as if some web enclosed his soul  
In a charmed sphere of silence, like a sleep  
Whose magic circle is a bar to sounds  
Finding a door of entrance anywhere.  
I pressed ahead to mark this distraught man,  
And, reining near him, for a while I fared  
Forbearing speech, with no uncivil eye  
Marking the line that closely bound his lips,  
And set face shrouded with a pallid calm.  
The dust was noiseless to our horses' feet ;  
The clarion-players kept their breathing low  
Till we should reach the city gates again,  
And all about us were but murmurous sounds  
Save that our loosened bridles chinked the chains



That bound them to the bits. Anon I saw  
The silent knight was ware some one was by ;  
The nerves relaxed that bound his face in iron,  
He was as if expecting one should speak.  
Then said I softly, as unto a friend,  
“ Wherefore so sad amid the glow of joy ?  
Art weary of the swaying crowd, or is't  
Some evil spell casts fetters round thy heart ?  
Or art thou of the trancèd ones who dream  
Great things and beauteous as Mohammed's heaven ?  
Counsel is good and should be pardon-sure  
When it is pure and born of friendliness.”  
His eye smiled sunlike as from broken clouds,  
And his lips smiled—he said, “ It is no pain,  
But only a charm that on me lays a bond,  
Once in a while, linked out of many a wreath  
Of spring-past memory-buds that once were fair,  
But have a bitter hemlock spray entwined.  
The hemlock flower has grown more green and wan,  
Its poison-reeds drained dry, and its drooped head  
Smit nigh to death's decay, while all the rest  
Smile yet in rosy sweetness. An thou should'st bear  
The listening, I will unburthen me,  
And whisper once a maiden untold tale.”  
I gave assent with all my curious heart  
Eager to hear this of him, and he 'gan.

“Laden with sultry airs the summer’s day,  
With unflecked blue as fills the heaven now,  
Was darkening to the eve. In a saloon  
Gold-lustre lit, and with the curling breaths  
Of frankincense made fragrant, on a couch  
Of cloth of gold I lay. ’Twas in the halls  
Of Saraman who held vicarious sway  
O’er Baghdàd for a season till he went  
Southward a mission to a higher rule.  
My host since noon, he had been called away,  
Leaving me looking unto his return,  
Listless upon the azure and the gold.”

Here as with idle rein we paced along,  
There came up at the spur with jest and laugh  
The Prince of El Khabùl, known unto each,  
Who changed the tranquil of our path for mirth ;  
A mirth that lay upon the purple knight  
But heavily, and though to all seeming calm,  
It irked him more than one might see for why.  
Nathless he talked and laughed, but in the midst  
He slid a whisper in mine ear “ At eve  
We meet. Glad welcome thine within the halls  
I parleyed of, that erst were Saraman’s,  
Since a long year made mine ; there give I thee  
This broken story.”

When the evening came,  
I turned my footstep to the palace gates,  
And being led through paven corridors,  
Ravished the while by dreamlike simple sounds  
Of fountains playing over silver bells  
Behind each curtain fold that I passed by,  
I found the knight Elhasan in the chamber  
Bright with the gold and azure as he told.  
Bidden by him I lay reclined the while  
He followed the beginning of his tale.

“Beneath this dome, within this selfsame niche,  
Unchanged these dragging moons, whose touch has  
passed

Calm over them but bitter over me,  
I lay, not dreaming e'er they should be mine.  
But after all that came to me therein  
I felt a sad strange yearning for the place,  
Like to a music-sound that calls from far ;  
And when it offered, then I spared not gold.  
That eve I lay a-dreaming phantom flowers  
And all the easy-gathered fruit of dreams,  
While yet the longed-for orchard was away  
Far out of reach of hands. From the chiboque  
I wafted through the lattices a cloud  
Of perfume fragrant as spice-laden vales,  
Which scattering mingled in the floating air,

Unseen and unrememberèd at all,  
As seemed love's tendrils curled about my heart  
To faint for lacking and budlike to die  
Without an opening morn. And listless thought  
Entwined itself with idle fancy thus—  
'Would that the chains that bind my soul so fast  
Were easy sundered as the coils of smoke,  
For they go floating on the sunbeam's breath  
Unweighed by any hindrance to their wings ;  
But other bonds break not their pain although  
One see them not, and they be frail as air.'  
Upon the lute I had interpreted  
The sad sweet pain of love with scarce a hope  
And sheltering hope o'ergrown with bitter weeds  
Loveless to dwell in. She was his only sweet,  
Badour, his daughter, but away from me,  
Brightening some lonely maiden room afar.  
The darkness of this corner shrouded me  
Like desolation, and the fired chiboque  
Was curtain-hid in heavy draperies.  
I thought of her, and yearned for her, and fell  
Into a weariness anigh despair.  
While yet I fed upon the dream of her  
With heavy longing soul, my pulses smote  
My languors into life ; I saw and knew  
Her entering—unknowing I was there.

Silent she came and every pace of hers  
Was keener than a blood-beat on my heart.  
She came, the all of all the world to me ;  
She came, as on a misty autumn night  
Mounts the orbèd moon among the pale wan  
stars,  
Through the dim haze that all aside she waves.  
She came ; and all my soul was filled with her :  
Pearls were a frontlet on her lucent brows  
And made a gleaming line along the curve  
Of her high bosom, as to match the zone  
That bound upon a girdle of rose silk  
Gleamed fretted gold and jasper. Thus she came,  
And shone upon my loneliness a queen,  
A queen of joy. And as she swept along,  
Slender and stately as a maiden queen,  
Amid the weeping blossoms of her hair  
Floated long trail of lawn, like thin white clouds  
That curl about the sun. Her loveliness  
Was as a necklace radiant of all gems ;  
Her lips a ruby in the kiss of noon,  
Her eyes the diamond lustre that did melt  
Its flaming in the pearls of unshed tears.  
Above her eyes the dark brows communèd,  
Curled in love-language ravishingly sweet,  
And, as with love, long lashes quiverèd,

Like a dark maiden in the Sun-god's arms.  
Thorns were to me the roses of her cheek,  
And doubly sharp their bloom like a smooth  
    bud's :

My restless eyelids swelled beneath the wounds  
Forcing their fire upon the inmost eye.  
Spell-bound I lay in rapturous amaze,  
Listing as if to echoes from afar,  
As o'er the dainty arching of her feet  
Murmured light silver anklets as she moved.  
Then stirred the perfect coral of her mouth  
To her sweet thought that deemed she was alone.  
I spoke not, neither could I, but gazed on,  
With entranced eyes and in a charm soul-bound,  
As she passed by me to the window niche ;  
Whence looking down the date tree avenue,  
There, through the gaping lattice, unto herself  
She 'gan to sing a faint and timid song.

The sunset calm lies over all the land ;  
The restless wave makes ripples on the sand ;  
    Peace, I would summon thee upon the lute !

A marble face is dead and pale and cold ;  
Fire is of life, and fire no calm can hold ;  
    Peace, I would call to thee upon the lute.

Madly blow storms, but soon the winds have cease ;  
Love's waves beat crueller, but nought brings peace ;  
Peace, I could weep for thee upon the lute.

The dew that falls in mountain vales is sweet ;  
Hopes that are born to love-lost hearts are fleet ;  
Peace I can summon not upon the lute.

Low sigh the sounds of love-birds' quarrellings ;  
The darts are keen of sweetest love's own wings ;  
Peace, is it death that calls thee to the lute ?

The swollen eye may never cease from tears,  
Sad melodies may quiver in the ears ;—  
Peace, Peace, 'tis vain to pray thee on the lute !

As sweetly thus she sang of broken peace,  
And of the fever of a raptured soul  
In unison with mine, entranced I lay  
Watching the happy pearlets rise and fall,  
As moonbeams on the sea, upon her breast.  
The hall was as a palace full of light  
That filled mine eyes and left me in amaze  
O'erborne by overblessedness of love ;  
For now long days for long had I loved her  
Oft seen mid garden-flowers half unveiled ;

And, o'er-heard thus, seemed sure this song for me  
Breathed love. Methought to essay speech to her,  
Or sing the answering song of my own love,  
Having made shift to try her father's heart,  
But she thrilled forth in other verse and sang—

When thou wast here 'twas as a grove of citron sweet  
With all earth's treasures lying at my feet ;—  
When thou wast here.

'Twas as a bower where envious wind ne'er coldly  
curled,  
Where we were separate from the outer world,—  
When thou wast here.

My heart was overweary as a drooping flower,  
Till came to it the sun and dewy shower,  
When thou wast here.

Full deeply veiled were my timid maiden eyes  
Till rent the clouds sun-glancings loverwise  
When thou wast here.

My lonely hours are as long day without a noon,  
Whose sun is crowned so should it but be soon  
That thou art here.



The glamour by no dārkh horizon-line is bound,  
 But all is as one sphere of light around,  
                   When thou art here.

The pomegranate hath juice that never cloys to sip,  
 But sweeter far the honey of a lip  
                   When thou art here.

Come, rest me in thy arms for love hath ravished  
           sleep,  
 And hour to hour makes moan of watch I keep,  
                   Till thou art here.

The stars and clouds meet mingling in a gray  
           despair,  
 Till morning comes and dawn-winds scent the air,  
                   When thou art here.

How many hours are left wherein sighs interweave?  
 Sing low and tell the stillness of the eve  
                   Khabùl, Khabùl is here.

Khabùl! Khabùl!—O poison-ending song;  
 O dagger points and worse than venomèd barbs!  
 O hemlock-gray among the rosy flowers:  
 O bitterness and burning! Picture thou

A deep hoarse fire fed slowly hour by hour,  
Then drenched with rich hot wine, until the flame  
Keen-quivering is careless of control :  
But phantom is't of that fierce torrent gush  
That flamed forth from the chasm of my heart—  
The emptied chamber of my soul's repose,  
When thus I fell into such dark abyss.  
The syllables of his name of hate—that same  
That was so calmly said few hours ago—  
Rose to my lips upon the fighting blood  
Of love turned backward, and were launchèd forth  
On venom points of a dispiteous flame.  
As she turned round aghast I swooned, and know  
Nought further. How long the dimness lay  
Upon mine eyelids and my heart no whit  
Know I or care ; awakening I gazed  
Around in strange dismay, scarce consciously,  
Breathing as one within the gates of death.  
I was alone save that a spectral love  
Kissed a chill kiss of shuddering on my lips  
Like to a stab. Forth from the place I sped,  
All purposeless from fury, this way, that,  
Through woods and tangling brakes, from whence  
weird forms  
Like to the ancients of the hideous seas  
Crept forth, and claimed me as their own, and hung

Upon me grievously. At length I came  
Unto a stream whereon the slanting sun  
Lit up a lake of gold. Among the reeds  
I fell and dreamed I was again a child,  
While life o'erwrought worked to itself a cure,  
For childly plashed I circles in the pool  
Listing the croakings of the hoarse fen-birds.  
The waterlilies eyeing, then I longed  
To lie encradled in their broad green leaves  
That to the water-depths drink in the sun,  
While to bring sleep the ripples gaily sing.  
I stretched my palms and slid among the leaves,  
Which floated me in gentle oozy ways  
To where the river in clear pools lay still.  
Deep down below the water-face I fared  
Along weed-trellised vistas amber-flowering,  
Through grottoes wide made rich with foliate pearls.  
Arose a hand and touched me all unseen,  
Leading me down to enchanted palaces  
Dim in the fretted work of myriad gems  
That all around did glimmer wondrous eyes.  
I felt a light flash through the tangled flowers  
And, nearer drawn, saw seated on a throne  
Of tints like inner pink of water-shells  
A shadowy form unknown that gleamed and shone  
Like bodiless stars, it was so tremulous,

Beyond all colourings of our faint words.  
He moved no hand but seemed to beckon me  
As though it were a needle to the stone ;  
And voices glided forth, though no lips moved,  
And murmurous joyance soothed and filled my soul.  
The slanted arrows of the sun found way  
Through all the mass beneath the wind-stirred wave,  
And, broken in the ripples, shot around  
Lambent and flitting gleams with feather flakes  
Of luminous mildness ; which fair light shed out  
Commingled somehow with that utterance.  
My soul contains not of those breatheen words,  
But this I know, that when I am alone,  
With heart made void by chasms oped again,  
They come as morning airs to wearied sleep,—  
With scent of the fresh fragrance that exhales  
From balmy buds just gathered in the dew.  
'It might be dream ' you say ' upon the bank,'  
'It might be sense made quicker by the gush,  
Cool-flowing on hot fever, of the stream.'  
If dream it were, it had a gentle end,  
For I was given to the silver arms  
And floating body of the willing stream,  
Which laid me on its sloping marge to sleep  
Until the twilight came and took the sun,  
And to the moon 'twas given to waken me.

Thus hung and fell the golden-ringèd chains  
That bound me once in love until they were  
A burning on the limbs. Sometimes it comes  
That I have flushes on the brow which fade  
Into a strange cold sadness that benumbs ;  
But no more fevered in the olden way  
The lips breathe troubled breaths of venomous  
words,

Nor are they scorchèd with the bitter kiss.  
She clung to him she sang of, him thou knowest  
We saw so laughter-full few hours ago.  
He wots not this : she cared for me no whit,  
And knew not of my deathly swoon,—may-be  
Sense-scared at hearing of an unknown cry  
Blurred by a throat too dry to make clear speech ;  
And flying frightenedly without her veil.  
Thus have I pictured it, and true thou know'st,  
Of twain that love one maiden only one  
Hath love of hers, and he is all in all ;  
And not a speck upon a gilded sky  
Is others' love beside, nor ever known  
Are all the emptied vials of their souls,  
For that one fills both eyelids with delight.

A while ago I gathered me a song,  
Made of the meaning of the voice that rang  
Its limpid tones within the river grots,

To heal my wound again when its fire comes ;  
For like a bird that makes a wheeling flight  
Far through the winds and over forest boughs,  
And yet returneth to her nest anon,  
So yield me rest and circle far away .  
The thoughts and fancies that made dreams so wild,  
Yet passion, wholly, never leaves her warp  
In the close web she tangled o'er the heart.

Fierce brother Flame hath scorched thee through  
the soul enow ;  
Come where cool streams shall flow around thy brow,  
Come to me now.

A thundercloud of hate met love and crushed thy vow,  
A rock beneath the earing brake thy plough ;  
Come to me now.

Flame is a barren monster wasting far and wide ;  
Take to thy pain my rest that storm denied ;  
Come to abide.

Unmingled flames are fierce, more fervent than the  
bride ;  
Here where cool gleamings quiver silver-dyed  
Come to abide.

Leave bitter-red drooped plants that love hath sown ;  
The grotto where the lily lives alone  
Take for thine own.

Blasts wild and feverous thy smokeless fires have  
blown ;  
Where'er the blue sleeps o'er the jewel-stone  
Take for thine own.

The water-life hath rest in depths below the shore  
Serene in storms howso the fire-gods roar ;  
Leave me no more.

My signet on thy brow, my calm at the heart's core,  
Soothing where flame was ravaging before ;  
Thy storm, thy pain is o'er.

This is the song they made me for my peace ;  
For surely love was never like to mine,  
To channel such dire passage through the heart.  
'Tis well to have at hand some antidote  
When one is threatened by a serpent bite ;  
And this it is that gnaws in me sometimes,—  
O if she knew the while that I was by,  
And from the velvets of her cruel lips  
Thrust out those dagger-points to poison me ;

Soothing me first with her sweet singing words  
To kill me with the sting of her despite !  
Sing me the song ; it is the charmèd draught  
To still me when I madden at such thought :  
O sing, O save me from this burning heart.  
Woe that dire hemlock-spray among the flowers !  
Sing, sing : I feel the rippling balm abound,  
Whose spell dissuades the bitterness from me,  
Washing with streams that evetide strews with  
stars."



## BEFORE DEATH.

---

ALONE, alone, and ever in the night ;  
Grasping the silver thread of a wan star,  
While all the dangers crowd upon the sight,  
And all the hopes shrink backwards and afar.

Alone, alone, and ever in the night ;  
Listing the driving of the barren waves,  
While the tired foam just glimmers faint and white  
As the wide breast of sand the sea-dew laves.

Alone, alone, and ever in the night ;  
Watching the clouds roll over the sky-sea,  
With tears o'erdrinking on the duskèd light  
As stars and smiles melt coldly oversea.

Alone, alone, and ever in the night ;  
Alone, and desolate, without a hand  
To grasp and hold for guidance or delight ;  
Alone amid the tangles of the strand.

Alone, alone, and ever in the night  
That glooms down densely with a darkened  
eye ;  
Alone, alone, uncovered in the fight,  
Sinking for faint to deathly lethargy.

Alone, alone, and ever in the night,  
Meeting the stream that flows against the breast ;  
Stung by the arrows of the winds' despite,  
Sharing the burthen of the waves' unrest.

Alone, alone, and ever in the night,  
As the strained feet wax weary of the shore,  
That is all rough and full of undelight,  
Whereon the moongleams do not linger more.

Alone, alone, and ever in the night,  
With a dim presence as of succour by,  
That cometh wingèd with a streamy flight,  
Wafting a starbeam through the storm anigh.

Alone, alone, and ever in the night  
Made luminous in the pulsing of the ray  
That, gathered from the darkness of affright,  
Answers, though faintly, through the dripping  
way.

Alone, alone, and ever in the night,  
    Buoyed from the dragging of the deathful sea ;  
Alone, alone, with aiding on the right,  
    And storm-winds washing to the left and lee.

Alone, alone, and ever in the night,  
    Ablaze with little drops of golden flower,  
That bloom like mosses where the heart partite  
    Opens the chasms of its darkest hour.

Alone, alone, and ever in the night,  
    Bearing the winters as the springs begin  
To feed their hopes to radiance exquisite  
    In the new nurture of the day within.

Alone, alone, and ever in the night,  
    Sowing bright seed in an enkindling home,  
Till faint fair blossom sheds a noble light  
    O'er the long ways that are across the foam.

Alone, alone, and ever in the night,  
    With soul undaunted till gray clouds unveil  
The golden portals of the infinite,  
    Rose-hued with mornings that nor faint nor fail.

*June, 1868.*

## DAPHNE.

### A STUDY FOR A PICTURE.

~~~~~  
*Here is the text, so limn your sermon, sister ;  
Make Daphne rosy-wet  
Just where new beauty kist her,  
And half-regret .  
Mixt with the nascent life half-laureate.*

~~~~~

I SEE rich meadows lying in a fold  
Of clustering forest and of mountains old ;  
I see the bending heads of unbruised herbs  
Touched by a foot that scarce the dew disturbs,  
Struck by a glancing foot of rosy white  
That leaps and falls in agony of flight,  
Outstripping floating flowers upon the stream  
That flows alongside with a rival gleam.  
There is rich gold unfileted and free  
That fell erewhile in ripples to the knee,  
But now it lingers on the opposing air  
Blown backward from the brow and features fair,

As the swift maiden, with a fervent face  
And parted lips, impels her urgent race.  
One garment slips and on a flower-bank lies,  
But she speeds on with unreverted eyes,  
While through thin folds her tender limbs are seen—  
New forms of sunlight on the grassy green ;  
As when a cloud hath passed that hid the light  
From glancing on the meadows warm and bright.  
Her breath comes swift and troubled by her fear,  
For well she knows a fleet-foot man is near,  
Who brushes past the boughs with heedless sway,  
And cares for nought so he be on her way.  
He came anear her by the lucent wave  
Wherein was great delight her limbs to lave,  
And in the shrining of whose mirror lone  
The thin white garment and the linen zone  
She scarce had drawn and girt about her waist  
Fresh from the girdling of the water chaste.  
She sat among the reeds, the sweet-lipped may,  
Heedless of aught save the white water's play,  
Nor had she fear of aught, until an arm  
Essayed to encircle her, at which alarm  
She sprang and slipped away with panting heart,  
Taking her course as straight as a swift dart,  
Whither she knew not ; having in her thought  
But hope to outrun, or yield a prize dear bought.

She flies through reeds and where lowlying grasses  
Ope a moist path to speed her as she passes ;  
And o'er curved hills her glancing way she wends,  
Bent like an osier as the path ascends,  
And smoothly gliding down the yielding sward  
As slips the wind from crest of wave downward.  
Would I had guerdon of a swift bird's wing  
To be about her always hovering,  
To draw her lips to mine in soft embrace,  
And whisper words of counsel for the race ;  
To look into her eyes and fan her brow,  
And be the wind as it is by her now.  
For I would lead her by an easy way  
Whereby she might chance find escape away,  
Or if she drooped beneath the bold bright sun,  
And seemed as yielding ere the race were won,  
I would enclasp her white limbs in my arms  
And bear her far away from all alarms,  
Giving her rest unto her little feet,  
And balmy kisses to her soft lips sweet.  
But, ah ! I can but see and hope and long  
As through the opening meads she winds along,  
Grown weaker now, and panting from the toil  
Of maiden limbs unused to such turmoil.  
Small store of paces are between them now,  
But brokenly upon the air a vow

Floats forth, and sweetly to the echoes ring  
Half-uttered notes as if one tried to sing.

“Ye gods, if there be pity now for me  
Whose drooping limbs are spent thus fruitlessly,  
Aid me and bless. Were I some fragrant flower  
To have no terror mar the happy hour,  
But in the sunlight by the river side  
To love the dew and be none other's bride,  
I should be blest and calm; or I would be  
The windblown branches of some sacred tree,  
And yield my praise in blossoms spring by spring,—  
A holier worship than the words I sing.  
Whate'er be it, but grant your timely aid  
To bless a maiden praying sore afraid.”

She felt swift answer come unto her plaint,  
And strength inflowing as a balm from faint.  
She turned reproachful eyes to him scarce seen,  
Who frightened her upon the silent green;  
And started, strangely seeing in his eyes  
The tender light of many mysteries,  
Whence knew she him as gracious and divine  
Who gave her chase upon that long long line.  
I saw the blush come o'er her like a rose;  
The half-reluctant crimson comes and goes;  
Her glowing limbs make pause, and she is stayed,  
Wondering the issue of the words she prayed.

The god draws nigh, all beauty, free of guile,  
And gleameth radiant in a generous smile ;  
And she, she droopeth with a wistful face,  
Like some young floweret's perfect bended grace.  
But ah, poor maid,—alas that it should be!—  
Her pulses slacken, and a lethargy  
Is cold upon her limbs, and her long hair  
Flows round her in a manner strange and rare.  
Her eyes wax dim as with fixed glance she sees  
The suppliant god before her on his knees,  
With mighty shoulders bent for her to press,  
And arms and bosom seeking the caress ;  
And sweet it were to rest the weary head  
On tender pillowing of that ample bed.  
Too late, too late, the laurel closes round,  
Drooping broad leaves in canopies profound :  
The golden lovelight fades upon all things,  
And she, borne innerward as on slow wings,  
Sees a great mist arise o'er branch and leaf,—  
The cruel harbinger of new cold grief.  
Alas! alas! the newcome life grows calm,  
And her lit eyes are closed and sealed with balm,  
But a chill pain is on her inmost soul,  
And gathered memories, mixt, together roll.  
'Tis over,—all the love that might have been,  
And Phoibos is alone upon the green,



Watching pale laurel boughs grow wet with tears,  
And dreaming dreams in every sound he hears.  
Yet never answer to his woe doth come,  
Save breaths of fragrance, from the laurel dumb :  
Nathless the leaves, as in a whisper soft,  
Grow murmurous in the wind, and flutter oft ;  
And his bright head he bends and kisseth them,  
As one would touch a maiden's garment hem.

I looked no more, because that I grew sad,—  
Eve-darkening leaves the last long sight I had.

*August, 1868.*

## H Y P E R M N E S T R A .

---

A T length is sleep drawn over him, and love  
Is over now,—sped through its day and gone.  
O the dire weariness of this delay  
Till the last flutter of my heart shall cease,  
Swift as the dying flash of unfed light !  
Like as the white wind-flowers I, a child  
With sister virgins, gathered in the vales,  
Would sicken of our palms and fade and die,  
And, grown so unlovely that we cast them forth,  
Would shrivel into union with the dust ;  
So hath this love begot and borne bright leaves  
That change and cold calamity make wan,  
Shedding them all about my feet and ways.  
Asleep! asleep! so never saw I man  
In the bright maiden days that are gone dead  
With flowers and love and store of happy things :  
Amid such barrenness yet doth he sleep  
Choosing one happy hour before he die ?

Would that on me long sleep might fall, to smooth  
The biting fangs of fate's dispiteousness,  
For like as claws of ragged granite lie  
Under moss-velvet, they should touch me not,  
But now they tear me with a bitter tooth.  
Woe, woe; how shall I smite a man asleep,  
Of form suchwise, and mighty panting breast  
Manlike and stern, but of such gentle ease  
And tender pillowing for a woman's hair?  
O woe, how shall I turn myself to slay  
This man,—my love; this god who lieth here  
Defenceless, weaker than a maiden's tears?  
His breathing-strokes are early winds of spring  
Laden with kisses of a fragrant mouth:  
His brow is marble, calm and pale and cold,  
Carven by iron chisel into form  
That feigneth life;—he is as good as dead,  
The maiden victim of an erewhile maid.  
His eyelid in the shadow of my face  
Half stirs or trembles, but the eyes are still,—  
By soft dark flower and woof of mingled hair  
Freed of the lucent yearning that they bore,  
And kindled from the influence of mine  
Unto a grand full passion. Now they dream of it.  
So sleeps the lake when eventide hath laid  
Her closing petals on the bright red sun,

And equal ripples mark an even line  
 Enyellowèd of faint subsiding foam ;  
 While music-memories of hushed forest-songs  
 Haunt all the groves around.

O doom and death

To all serenitudes and fresh cool airs ;  
 Let storm and fire draw near. O would that I  
 Might rend my heartstrings into rugged bars  
 Of passion-twisted steel, and mould an arm  
 Of adamant that should usurp this flesh,  
 Trembling thus childly, all so lax is it.

To mar the smoothness of my own white throat  
 He pressed and kissed just now, and likenèd  
 To lips of lily leaves uncovering ;  
 Would this bring joy at all, or a twin wound  
 Lead us to peace along some distant way ?  
 Though seas of mist o'ershadow all, to us  
 Linked hand in hand may be dim death were fair.  
 Ah me, ah me, I feel a sudden pang ;  
 I see fair Aphrodite visioned nigh,  
 With all the roselights of her lips death-pale,  
 Dissevering the clasp because of blood ;  
 And woe comes on and all of love recedes.

The air is cool unto my aching eyes  
 Wearied with kisses and consumed with love.  
 I see the gray wing of the rising dawn

Whose blush shall fling no roses in my path,  
But evil bloom of black and barren bane.  
I hear hushed breaths of cruel sated speech  
Hissing in murmurs from the bridal rooms.  
Alas, my sisters, what know ye of love  
Worm-cankered in the bud and no true flower ?  
And I, and I, what is there left for me ?  
My father's purpose will not let delay  
The stealthy ingliding of his faltering feet,  
And I shall see the wrath of haggard brows,  
Mine ears filled full with horrid whisperings  
Of "Fares it well ?" and "Hath the plot sped right ?"  
So shall it not, now know I love for love.

Lynceus, O flower of life, and rushing wing of wind  
That bloweth keenest breath upon my heart  
Grown restless as a flake of troubled foam ;  
Take me and soothe me unto heavenly sleep  
Divinely rocked within those arms of thine.

Wake, wake, my lord ; the dawn is in the sky ;  
Awake ere it grow pallid at the flame  
Of scorching death that soon as e'er it come,  
If fate relent not, shall entwine us both.  
Catch me and flee, for doom is at the door,  
And seeketh thee and me. O sweet, thine arms

Girdle my body, and I fear not now,  
Hidden away from every dreadful thing,  
And clinging closely to the breasts of love.  
O make no stay, the lattice lets in morn  
With living fragrance lovelier than death.  
Stay not for aught ; each is the other's all.  
Fly southward unto groves of vine, and set  
Wide sea between this cruel blood-stained house  
And all the coming affluence of our loves.  
So let the omen work its fatal will.

BLONDELL DE LA NESLE.

---

I.

WITHIN a forest deep in Austria lies  
A pathway struggling on from lights to  
shades :

'Tis as some sacred grove, and, far within,  
An ancient castle towers it like a god  
Whose shrine hath homage of the woods.

I see

A down the glade, in minstrel habiting  
That hath seen brighter hues, a youth long-haired ;  
Singing he wends along, and 'tween tree boles  
Thus verse the roll and pauses of his song.

“ Long fruitless days of tending one long way  
Unto a goal hid far away, unknown ;  
Sick unavail makes drearier day by day,  
And hope shakes pennon ere her life be flown.

A way-worn song I sing of many a hill  
Wearily fronted in a barren quest ;  
Slow wind the notes thro' many a creeping dell,  
Rich of all fruits save one, the balmiest.

Dark are the forest windings overtrailed  
With weeds that reach nowhither, like despair,  
And all the land is of ill bloom and ailed,  
Since that one hour hath sown its winter there;

Woe, my lax fingers that do fill the holt  
From gentler strings than of good Norman bows !  
My life for it, so had an arblast bolt  
Measured its speed with keenest glance of those

O'er-prying eyes, when on them gleamed the crowns  
That made the jewelled gauntlet of the king  
A thing of mark to such unlessoned clowns,  
On death they should have flashed their tale-  
bearing.

But nought was by, nor shaft nor axe nor sword,  
Or unused arms had eased the blade of thirst  
In the dark river of his heart's first word,  
Ere into woe its fateful bubblings burst.



'Twere joy again the weary way to fare  
As pilgrim-merchants, on a hostile beach ;  
'Twere blither far a double bond to share,  
Than thus to be dissevered each from each.

Then might there be sweet song's companionship,  
The song that very memcry loves to mar,—  
None answer following to the singer's lip,  
The tenson music broken bar from bar.

O that the standard which is not a king's,  
But flaunts out higher than the nobler trees,  
Were hurled into the moat's meet blackenings,  
As once, i' faith, in days more gay than these.

O black-knit brows of Austria insolent,  
O coward traitor of the void crusade !  
O but once more to see the banner rent,  
But once the clouding of thy cruel blade.

Peace barren wrath, and let faint hope suspire  
To other ears than of the twittering eaves ;  
Be once again hope's fingers on the lyre,  
Once echo answer from the ivy-leaves !”

## II.

The sunbeam maidens clad in long sheen veils  
Draw through the grating of deep donjon walls  
Their earliest light, and, dancing gentle ways,  
Toss shafts of gold athwart a cold grey room.  
There on a lonely pallet unadorned  
Lies Lion-Richard, great and gaunt of form.  
Broken his breath and slow, his tawny locks  
Enfloating idly on the wind's thin arms  
That enter with the light.

Long hours, long hours,  
From yesternight to close upon the dawn,  
The prisoned king had trodden weary steps  
Within the cage's gloomy bounds and strait,  
Whose walls were merciless and strong to bar  
From all that loved and all that could avail.  
Red wrath, alternate with a pale despair,  
Had worn the limbs that were a wall erstwhile  
To hinderward, in face a rushing flame ;  
And poisoned all his peace with restlessness.  
Killing the night in pacings wearisome  
Lead-footed on the iron prison-base,  
Toward morning had he couched, woe-worn and spent,  
And now was in a revel and a dream  
Of hot onrush against the Saracen,  
Of horse-breast meeting horse-breast in the strife,

And the great breath of fire 'twixt man and man.  
Then wove his dream-webs with a gentler thought  
Of home, and faithful wife, and retinue,  
Of noble Chaill and generous Persarain,  
And all to whom turned ever his sad heart.  
Sweet surely is the dream, and now he sees  
Fair blossoms of his birthday-plant the broom,  
Tasting the dewdrops of the russet moors,  
His birthright lands, free as the wind whose voice  
In eddies round doth whisper moans to them—  
“Plantagenet, Plantagenet a slave.”  
So were he but the wing-rush of that wind  
To sing his freedom to each blithesome flower,  
He would be storm-full blast and roar across  
This cruel land in hurricane, until,  
In the salt passage o'er a homely sea,  
The white spray told him he was near the land—  
A loving land while all was hate in this.  
Then nearing surf and shoreland would he join  
The breakers carolling as he came by,  
In well-loved songs—such were they that he made  
For tenson-singing in his happiest hours.  
So twined are song-notes with his slumbering hours;  
He is trouvère and free and boy again,  
And though the chains of waking or of sleep  
Lie heavy on him, freedom leads his dreams.

Why mocketh thus the subtle dreamland shore,  
Whose phantoms idly pass and idly go,  
Bringing the shadow of a vain delight?  
'Tis but half dream, and he half slumbereth,  
And listeth as the echo dies away.  
But why in air is not the dream-song spent,  
Fading and bringing aching to his heart,  
And dreary deadness of captivity?  
But mounting ever on a higher breath  
It gleams a richer cluster of sweet sounds.  
How doth a dungeon life delude a man!  
Wherefore are dreams so bitter sweet as this?  
Flamelike he shakes his tawny hair in waves;  
The nerve-cords strain and pulses bear the shocks  
Of blood that flashes lightning through the veins,—  
Fierce blood as in the roar of Ajalon.  
Why mocks him thus a phantom of past joys?—  
But ever yet upon the wind there floats,  
Piercing the mighty walls and slowly sung,  
His song's refrain—"My words are idly vain,  
And I alone unpitied wear a chain."  
Sleep staggers, and her clutch is flung away,  
Like morning dewdrops from a lion's mane.  
He hath his soul; 'tis real—he awake,  
And stedfast breezes bear a dying strain—  
"To tell how long I wear this biting chain."

“Where now the viol that I flung aside,  
When wearied with the torrent of my wrath  
Against those recreant lords, but to despair  
The dark sirvente turned. Ah dusty strings,  
Ring madly forth again. God grant he hear,  
And have the guerdon of saint-errant deed.”

## III.

The dawn is doubled in the morning air,  
The sunlight bridges o'er the void and dark,  
And tenson joy-notes quest and answer thus—

## BLONDELL.

“My lady's eyes are languishing in tears,  
My lady's heart is dead with fears;  
Why doth he tarry as his star appears?

His amorous star is sailing up the sky,  
Marking the hour he cometh by;  
To kiss her lips it hath not brought him nigh.

She wearies of the waiting, stricken and sad;  
Ne'er shall he come to make her glad?  
Shall it be all to dream the kiss she had?”

## RICHARD.

My heart is as one kneeling at her side ;  
Love is to cruel bonds allied,  
Love follows her, but I must e'en abide.

The may-bloom scent hath entered from afar,  
The winter fetters loosened are,  
Hope gives a brighter sheen to my sad star.

Tell her I come, so she will but await  
Summer to melt my frozen fate ;  
Heart joins to heart e'en though the noon come late.

## BALLÀTA.



**Y**OUNG Morys and his maiden May,—  
Sing gay, sing gay,  
With love filled full the summer day ;  
O sing gay, sing gay.

Gaily, gaily, gaily,  
In the joy of the play of light feet,  
As burning sweet,  
In the glow of the rhythmical flutter of flight,  
Meeting swift modulations of air and of light,  
As the kiss of the sun coming wavelets to greet,

The ripple of the music flows ;  
Who knows, who knows ?  
The kisses blossom like the rose  
Only the happy summer knows.

Sunlights, rose lights, white lights,  
In the sweep of their fingers are music to us ;  
Here and there idle thus,  
Hither and thither across the lattice see floating, how  
marvellous.

Came jealous winter with her snow,—  
Sing low, sing low ;  
She took a maid, she showered woe ;  
O sing low, sing low.

Skipping, skipping, skipping,  
With a poise of the foot ere the trippings resume,  
To the poise of the tremulous trip of the tune,  
To the beat, to the pulse, to the heart of the  
tune,  
With archings and droopings and glidings adown the  
room.

Young Morys sits beneath the tree  
Of Binnorie, of Binnorie ;  
His blank eyes speak not : O may-be,  
His soul with hers yet claspeth she.



In the feint to fly,  
    To lie on the air,  
    As if it were water that rippled about the hair ;  
To heave a faint sigh,  
And to curve away tenderly, swooningly.

## THE FLOWER OF TRYST.

---

SHE sped along the wild sea strand,  
Where waves sang dirges for the slain ;  
She halted at the battle plain.

She bent her down unto the sand—  
Her eyes asked wildly of the woe  
To learn if one was lying low.

She sought the sheen of grey blue mail  
Whereon a single flower was wrought,  
A ring—his scarce since morn—she sought.

The sun had wellnigh spent his trail,  
The light was waxing weak and wan ;  
She saw a flower on a mailed man ;

Her eyes burned dim in mingled fire  
Of hope and agony and fear :—  
He lay as still as on a bier.

His hand was stiff in blood and mire ;  
The sea was tiding swiftly on,—  
Her fingers grasped the hacqueton.

Her little fingers clenched and strove,  
The hasp would yield not to her hand,  
The sea bit trellis in the sand.

She drooped on death her weight of love ;  
A bud, crusht on her heart, did feel  
Its icy sister graven in steel.

She had no breath to sob or sigh,  
But close about her bosom's pain  
A stony weft did cling and strain.

A man's hand softly put her by,  
To reach the rigid gorget clasp :  
She looked up in the day's last gasp.

A ring made bright the forefinger,  
A brighter flower was on that breast ;  
His voice came of the weariest ;

With one great sigh he looked on her ;  
As one looks on the newly dead,  
He looked upon her face and said,—

“God’s hand makes ebb the o’erflowed bowl ;  
Love recks not or of life or death,  
‘ Troth is but one,’ the heart-sob saith.

“Slain, slain lies he, unto whose soul  
The greater love thy lovings bore !  
O Death, thou probest to the core !”

More glad than loosened waters’ flow  
She sprang, and made joy on his face :  
The crusht bud clung to its true place.

The cold black wave lapped friend and foe—  
The night was gathered ; and, afar,  
Shone out upon the sea a star.

*Guernsey, 7 Oct., 1868.*

## ORPHEUS AND THE LISTENERS.

---

ORPHEUS hath one of his bright dreams to-day,  
A mythic symbol that his songs obey.  
The god drips o'er him nectar from the skies,  
Whose dews exhaling in his voice arise.  
Come ye with me and list as he doth sing :  
Wend ye through Zephyrs of his sweepèd string,  
Along the forest-path ; ye see him there  
With eyes that catch the mysteries of the air.  
The lyre wreathes garlands as of melilote,  
By glad release of many a linkèd note  
To meet the sunbeams where between green leaves  
The gold rays sparkle, as 'twere one who weaves  
Colours with perfume ; so in the sun-rays  
The radiate song finds kindred. Thus his praise,  
In echoing words and dreams he wotteth not,  
Strikes on new strings of nature's polyglot,  
As the great pulsing of his soul beats hard,  
And he is rapt he knows not whitherward.

The hollow solitude of the deep wood  
Is all awake, and listening many a rood ;  
The pale pearl dews are wet upon the flowers,  
Bright in the kisses of the aubry hours ;  
All is a temple to the eyes of him,  
And he leads on the worshippers through dim  
Strange fires of reverence and starlit spheres.  
There is a wondrous hush in all that hears ;  
The spreading tangles of the beech-fronds shake  
Wherefrom in lissome circlings glides a snake,  
With crest against the sun, and cold stone eyes  
Lost in the mystery of the melodies.  
The great holm-oak, with full rough leaves for wings,—  
Lord of the increase of a thousand springs,  
Quivers to follow all its heart hath heard :  
Amid the branches is a hidden bird,  
Whose young throat seeks the hymning to essay  
In new faint cries, but fails she of her lay,  
And, resting in her cradle of the leaves,  
Dreams a hushed wonder, and half-joys, half-grieves.  
The tender voices of the Naiads seem  
To hide a murmurous joy, as by the stream  
Their silver lips drink of the foamy cools  
From the pale lily-cups that fringe the pools.  
These tremble, waving with a faint song-sound,  
As the hymn falls like balm on all around.

The mighty monarch of the wood, hard by,  
Looks forth amid the brake with noble eye  
Turned toward the flowing of the grateful food.  
The lioness hath brought her tawny brood  
From out the caverns of her dwelling dark  
Into its slanting sunlit mouth to hark.  
The restless cubs are silent as with fear,  
And she, she longeth for her lord to hear ;  
But he is lone upon some distant soil,  
Or in the cruelty of the hunter's toil,  
For hath he not returned for many days,  
And she has woe that music scarce allays.  
All birds, all beasts, all life of sun or gloom,  
All ragged ferns and opening lips of bloom,  
Drink in the limpid courses of the hymn,  
Eager yet still, as grasses when there swim  
Over the mead's hot breast new-opened springs.  
Within the circle of the words he sings,  
That quiver all around, is no man seen,  
Save himself only, who with gods hath been,  
And being filled with an unearthly morn,  
Far from the world to skies sublime is borne.

Yet one is by who sees the solemn rite,  
Who is enmeshed in wreathings of delight,  
By new strange influence bound in eye and ear,—  
A mortal feeling the divine is near.

Pressing, with footfall dropped without a sound,  
The golden mosses that are gay around  
From that rare singer's strange awakening,  
Follows a boy who lists each moaning string,  
Unseen and undiscerned, yet close always.  
Comes Orpheus silent to a grove of bays,  
And where the inner Oread haunt is dim  
Kneeleth adown, and in a holy hymn  
Unto the grove's still soul makes melodies.  
A little space away the meads arise  
With clustering knots of many a forest reed,  
And there in covert of the tangled weed  
His unreluctant foot the boy hath stayed,  
Eager to list what words the singer prayed:  
By draught too deep from founts by Helicon  
Rapt is his soul. Whilome in days agone  
Drank he with heat of gradual-glowing eye  
The streamy flame of Orphic melody,  
But never pulsed upon his wondering ears  
The sacred strain that all unknown he hears,  
As it wells forth on lonely paths untrod,  
And to no mortal seen, but to some god  
Whose garment's hem the music's waves doth haunt,  
Swayed to the highest fervour of the chaunt.  
He hangs, he trembles on each highest aim,  
Borne on the gush of scintillating flame,



Unto the realms that are the stars among,  
With heart-beats pulsing feverous and strong ;  
Then falls he, as the voice is dying low,  
Into deep cloud-hung caverns gray with woe,  
Where tears with veils o'er dusk the wandering air  
Into the dim cold meanings of despair :  
Herein come dreams that ever-dying roll,  
Herein an ecstasy of all his soul :  
Through all the song his fluttering life takes wing  
With every verse. No more for him to bring,  
For garland to the frontlets of the maids,  
The spring-buds gathered in the rose-dew glades ;  
No more for him the noble heart-beatings  
Of blood like wind or as the wrath of kings,  
Fanned to the glowing of a manly fire  
By stir of purposes and grand desire ;  
Cometh no more to him the wild delight  
To see the tracked tiger's eyes in sudden sight,  
And poise the golden gleaming javelin-head.  
His life doth wane, as from a fawn half-dead,  
Stricken so sore the stream it cannot brave,  
The blood flows ceaselessly to stain the wave  
That sucks it all away. So his ebb'd soul  
Have the cool arms of liquid music stole :  
He hath but life to follow Orpheus' lyre  
With echoes vain that scarcely dare aspire—

“Ye gods, if any prayer can come from me,  
That may take wing and flutter up the air,  
If any pulse of voice along the free  
And radiant ether may to pity fare ;

Shed forth this love, this life, this song on me,  
With its sweet meanings for my soul to share,  
For it is death to listen, and to be  
Caught thus in meshes of an unknown snare.

Flash forth this inner flame, bestow on me  
The mystic harmony to bless my prayer ;  
Without this flood is life a dead calm sea,  
Unfed of it all flowers are winter-bare.

Take ye a year of life, a year from me,  
Tear it away though it be golden fair,  
Take it though as its honey from the bee,  
But O the song, the song no more forbear.”

The sunrays swift slant gleams about the land,  
Touching his brow as with a soft warm hand,  
And by the leaves come floating forms divine,  
And on his hot wan eyes the fronds incline  
Cool vistas as of stars. A lucent calm,  
Gushing with rose-colours and scent of balm,

Suffuses all in an ethereal veil,  
Save the star forms that are so sweet and pale.  
In his white fingers twining rosy rays  
And circling him with dawn of coming days,  
They strike from out their music atmosphere  
A resonant lyre that Orpheus weeps to hear.—

“Come learn with us the ocean-tide of sound  
That the worlds chaunt along the blue profound ;  
Come where song-souls are all unbound.

Come, join morn-greetings of the sun’s delight,  
And when the even darkens into night,  
With stars intone on quivering chords of light.

Come to the choir ’neath Phoibos’ music-rods  
Chaunting the while the supreme Father nods  
Glad welcome to the fair young gods.

But one sole year to linger haddest thou,  
Though ne’er to heaven had floated this thy vow ;  
The frost that bound thy strings is loosened now.”

This is the vision to his wildered sense  
Who listens to the sacred song intense.  
Orpheus hath fallen silent with rapt ears,  
But that strange thicket of close boughs he nears,

And findeth there the boy with wide-oped eye  
That seems to pierce to heaven through the sky;  
With pallid brow and fainting throbs of breath  
Coming and going in a dream or death.  
Sudden arises from the curving mouth,  
As streams of water in a weary drouth,  
A strange new song, that leaves the lips aglow,  
And vibrates in the air with upward flow,  
As the pale lips grow colder and are still,  
Fixed like a flower that the sun doth fill.  
Uplooketh Orpheus as new winds arise  
Bearing the song unto the distant skies,  
Whence cometh it more faint and yet more sweet,  
As fly the moments with their hurrying feet.  
Then turn his eyes to earth where the pale form  
Rests on the grasses with the heart yet warm,—  
A lyre that could not bear the music's play,  
A bruised sad harp-string that one flings away.  
Orpheus hath lost the jubilant pulse of song,  
And thus the dirge that wails the groves among.

“With earth-fixed eyes, and bowed and drooping  
head,

I sit among dark chambers of the dead,—  
Silent and chill, for slain is my desire,  
Stricken and sundered from me as a fire

That cannot thrust flame-fingers through wan cloud,  
And smoke that clingeth to it as a shroud.

To a white breast cinctured with passion-flowers,  
To heaven-poised wings have bent mine eyes for hours  
    That rose and fell, not as they pulse on earth,  
    But, being born in an enraptured birth,  
Laid down their balmy lives and fled away,  
Leaving to me unutterable day.

Thence was the breath-fire of my soul made strong,  
And hidden harp-strings rolled a vibrant song  
    Over fair fields that blossomed in each note  
    To richer flower than makes a summer dote ;  
Such was the joyous vision that did haunt  
My soul, till death came breaking all the chaunt.

A god hath come and borne his life away,  
And now sings he to lyres of heaven's sway :  
    Alas, alas, I saw the mystery  
    That smiled on him, and left a void to me,  
Made barren by the strain that through the trees  
Floated above the murmur of the bees.

Would he were left to me who, lonely-born,  
Hear choirs of music usher in the morn

Who, only, of the world do catch the sighs  
Of all things beautiful in melodies,  
And blow them forth in whispers from a reed,—  
Sadly alone of all the world indeed.

Ah me! 'tis ill to weep when I should sing,  
And take the vision as a tokening  
Apollo hath his choir among the stars,  
Whose strings ring never in untuneful jars ;  
With eager soul, with eye in eyelid dim,  
Cometh to me to chaunt his glorious hymn."

SONG OF THE NAIAD, AIEEN.

---

**M** OON-PEARLS are mine eyes,  
And star-kist are my lips ;  
From the dew I arise  
On silver toe-tips ;  
And timid my glance is,  
As soft as my name,  
That I sing in joy-dances,  
A-trembling for shame to be heard, to be seen ;  
You might think me a bird,  
“ Aieen, Aieen,”

When the sky's lost amid  
The rain-mists of despair,  
In a cloud am I hid  
Of my blossoming hair,

And all that you see of  
My face is a pout,  
That chases the glee of  
The music all out of my song, for between  
Ugly lips cometh wrong  
“Aieen, Aieen.”

When the winds are all mad,  
And scatter wet leaves,  
And the storm-god is glad  
And the Zephyr grieves,  
Then my song waxes frantic,  
And mounts the wild air  
With laugh and with antic  
No mortal can dare, for an elf, a queen,  
I sing out of myself,  
“Aieen, Aieen.”

When a dream binds my heart  
With a slumberous bond,  
New melodies start  
From a world beyond,  
And my wild song is smitten  
To charms of a lute,



Whence rapture is litten  
That makes the voice mute—as a thing that  
hath been,  
And I tremble to sing,

“ Aieen, Aieen.”

Sweet love hath a bower  
On skirts of a storm ;  
'Tis spring for an hour,  
And then the dusk form  
Of an autumn of passion,  
From whence is there born  
Half-rosy, half-ashen,  
A bud with a thorn. Where love's blossoms  
have been,  
I sing softer than doves,

“ Aieen, Aieen.”

Love liveth in fears,  
As the moon when she flies  
Behind clouds of her tears,  
Till faint breeze-hopes arise,  
And she peeps out and catches  
A smile of sunshine,

Whose beauty she snatches  
To sparkle the wine that flows bright from  
between  
Her eyelids of light to  
Aieen, Aieen.

Of the dew do I quaff,—  
My lips deep in the bowl,  
Till a silvery laugh  
Lights my eyes to the soul,  
And I sing out aloud in  
Unfaltering note  
Bright chansons that crowd in  
My lily-stem throat; bold and strong, full of  
clear notes and keen,  
Thrills the lyric along with  
“Aieen, Aieen.”  
*July 30th, 1867.*

## A STUDY OF SUNLIGHT.

---

SAD fair days when the dying sun of autumn  
Slants the fire of a tender-grown benignance  
O'er brown leaves and the hopeless hearts of flowers,  
Comes it sweetly to me, with drowsy eyelids  
Turned full unto the flowing of his glory,  
Closed in tremulous mingling of the lashes,  
To draw over his face twilight and lucent  
Veils that are of the pink blue-veiny eyelid.  
On that streamy expanse of vision wander  
Floating colours of flowers—filmy blossoms,  
Changing tints as the cloudlets cross the sun-path,  
Crimson, violet, on a ground of roses,  
Dimly wrought on the hidden unshed teardrops ;  
Chaplet-twined till a tremble of the eyelid  
Changes all in a ripple of the eyedews,  
And the quiverings of the hues are like as  
Flowers in lace; or the gleam of moonlit waters,  
When the even is calm and waves pulse sadly

On the shingle in silver iridescence.  
Then I love to withdraw the folded petal  
That lies close on the lustre of the eyeball,  
Till the effluence of the sudden sunlight,  
Flashing over the orb a carmine splendour,  
Closes it in a gush of molten jewels.  
Then from spheres that a radiant bloom suffuseth,  
Straight is shapen a form of mystic fashion,  
Gathered out of a mist of liquid amber,  
Whose glow fadeth as closer draws the curtain ;  
Imaged into a scroll whereon are written  
Figures dark in a blue and perfect colour ;  
And sometimes, as they pale, there come upon them  
Shadowed gleams as of beauteous unknown faces  
Pearled around in an aureole liquescent,  
Vanished swiftly from all but dim remembrance.  
Then the joy of the sun-sphere yields to sadness,  
Hidden under the dusk of envious clouding,  
And the eyes can awaken from their dreamland  
To a gray like a chill and dewy morning.

## A STUDY OF MOONLIGHT.

---

WHEN white grace of the moonlight silvers  
over

Skies whose azure was splendid in the daylight,  
Skies which glimmering night doth love to gather  
Closer into the shrining of the star-depths ;  
Then to light upon avenues neglected,  
World-forgotten and hidden abbey meadows  
Closed around with a labyrinthine foliage,  
Worketh magical spells to pour upon me,  
As from flagons of light that flow with crystal.  
Here is lovely to lean against a column  
Bearing, brokenly, ancient temple arches  
Ivy-trellised and tending toward the star-gates,  
Hid away from the world and given wholly  
To all love of the silent sacred eve-tide.  
Herein floweth a draught of food for dreamlight  
Given forth from the white arms of the queen-star,  
When she sheds of her pure and vaporous pencils

Streams like hands with a rain of radiant touches  
The storm-beaten and sinking ruins over ;  
Soothes she gently the wounds where rapid winters  
Plant the tooth of a chill corrosion in them,  
And enweathes with a spell of nobler youthtide  
All that fail of their olden birthright stature.  
Hence they glow in a new illumined cestus,  
With such beauty of rest as fathers gather  
When the whiteness of age streams o'er their temples  
Budded round with the rose of daughters' faces.  
From the spires yet upborne among the glories,  
Comes a sigh for their fallen old companions  
That are lost to the glistening of the moonbeams,  
And hid low in an overgrowth of flowers,—  
Flowers asleep in volutes whose own are broken.  
Wild the blossoms that once were garden favourites,  
Tangled now in a growth of heedless grasses,  
Fragrant yet in the last decay of culture.  
Undisturbed in the calm of constant agetide  
Gleam the grays and the whites with still long  
    shadows,  
Save when cometh a whisper of the wind-song,  
Whereby blown in a change of rippling tremors,  
Shifts the sheen of the lambent tongues of moonlight,  
Broken under the clouds' half-closed eyelashes.  
But the life as a death is sad and lonely,

Wearisome in its tranquil ceaseless weeping,  
And away from the haunting of the paleness,  
That, like unto a smile of frightened joyance,  
Lies upon the unwakened lips of memory,  
Turn I unto the night-forgotten meadows.

MAID EDA.

---

THE spinning-chamber, floor to roof,  
Rings with a trampling charger's hoof ;  
Stirred to sweet wonder virginal—  
Maid Eda by the farther wall,  
With lapse of finger from the woof,  
Hearkens the sharpening echoes fall.

Athwart the sun a plume outstreams,  
Crestwise from jewelled velvet's gleams ;  
Maid Eda's thoughts rise whispering,—  
“What shadow strange do sunbeams fling  
Upon the smooth white web that seems  
Nigh rent across and opening?”

A little foot too quick to wait  
She bendeth toward the lattice strait,—  
Her white arms loosened of the flax  
That curls up into tangles lax,  
As gemwise in the window-gate  
She sets a throat like stainless wax.



What shaft hath struck the maiden meek?—  
Her heart shakes roses o'er her cheek ;  
    What hath a maid of humble house  
    To stir her thoughts in gold-crowned brows ?  
O cruel pain of eagle's beak  
    Set deep in dove's breast timorous !

Shamefast for her heart's quickened beat,  
She turns away her timid feet,  
    And to her place behind the loom  
    Flies she to cover her cheeks' bloom,  
And there—half-hidden in her seat—  
    Fain would her hands the web resume.

What fate was in that yesternight,  
What arrow in the blue moonlight?—  
    When in the lonely forest-glade  
    Her weakening voice rang out for aid  
Against the churl that dared affright  
    With his rude touch a modest maid.

What fate was in that swift white hand  
That answered flashing like a brand,  
    And gave the boor staunch evil blood  
    Where moss lay scarce moon-seen for wood ;  
That softer than a rose-garland  
    Stayed her from falling where she stood ?

“ But what is he to me ? ” she saith,  
“ What vain thing quickeneth my breath ? ”  
    Yet still the threads hang all arow  
    Snow-white by her lax fingers’ snow ;  
Her gold head, as she listeneth,  
    In rosy shame is bended low.

A spurred heel rings without the door,  
His gentler tread is on the floor ;  
    He cometh with his eyes on her,  
    And as she cannot speak or stir,  
The fountains of his lips outpour  
    Fair words that fall like meniver.

“ Sweet maiden Eda, grant me grace—  
Last lone one of a noble race ;  
    Give me the maid’s wreath to unlet,  
    And with a tender hand to set  
The silver star that is thy face  
    Beneath its due gold coronet.”

“ O give me flower of fair replies ! ”  
Her long gold hair is o’er her eyes,  
    She droopeth with her glorious head,  
    But ne’er sweet answer hath she said.  
“ Maid Edith ; Eda ! ” then he cries,  
    “ But hearken though thine eyes be fled.”

“The wealth of half a kingdom thine,  
In straight-rowed wheat and clustering vine;—  
    Within thy hand the gold shall be  
    To fling as flowers about the lea;  
Let but the one May-bud be mine,  
    The spoil of all the lands for thee.”

With flax and fingers in a knot,  
She made as though she heard him not,  
    But once upon the loom she threw  
    Swift glance of moist eyes' heavenly blue;  
The passion of his soul waxed hot,  
    And breath from deeper founts he drew.

“Woo I and win maids fair to see,  
Kings' daughters, ladies of degree;  
    If haughtiest dames shed out their pride  
    To catch and trample far and wide,  
And their bruised hearts I fling to thee,  
    Still shall bride-blossoms lack the bride?”

A tear is on the tangled strands,  
Her blushed face paler than her hands;  
    But yet no honey of her lip  
    Pearls into words for him to sip,  
Nor hath the lord of many lands  
    The wayside bud to pluck and strip.

He stood a moment silently  
 With proud bent head and troubled eye ;  
     Then all the soul came forth in him  
     With voicing that was blurred and dim,—  
 “ Are all the gold-drops far and nigh  
     As nought thy floret-cup to brim ? ”

“ Sweet love, but give me thy set task,  
 And whisper all thy soul may ask ;  
     Whate'er love saith is straightway done.”  
     Her eyes awake his eyes upon,  
 Rend off her budlike lips their mask  
     With words that breathe of cinnamon.

“ The sun's best gold is shed about  
 The forest trees that tower without,  
     And wealth and dower of every wind  
     Within their broad embrace they bind ;  
 The sphered sky spreads her vesture out  
     On noble branches unconfined.”

“ Great things for great, and wide demesne ;  
 Gold-browed with power be dame and queen ;  
     The little orchard-wall beneath,  
     What hath the plant save morn's dew-wreath  
 From one sweet spot of sky to glean ?  
     How shall it breathe a larger breath ? ”

Her brow and maiden throat, aglow,  
Flushed deep at unused words, yet lo!  
    Eye whispers eye and melts the wall,  
    And either's hand is other's thrall ;  
With drooped face makes she answer low—  
    “ But only love me, that is all.”

*February, 1869.*

# ESSEX AND THE RING.

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*Persons represented :*

ROBERT DEVEREUX, *Earl of Essex.*

SIR ROBERT CECIL, *First Earl of Salisbury.*

LORD THOMAS HOWARD, *Constable of the Tower.*

AN OFFICER AND GUARD.

A PAGE.

ELIZABETH R.

CATHARINE, *Wife to Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham ;  
and Sister-in-Law to Lady Scroope.*

LADY MARY MARVEN, *Maid of Honour to the Queen.*

*Time : February, 1601.*

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## SCENE I.

ESSEX *alone.* *Scene : London. A Prison-Chamber in the Tower  
with a window looking out on a corridor.*

Ess. YET shall she yield—this over-haughty  
queen,  
Knowing my roughness as sincerity.  
After long love of hers and trust in me,  
As not unkind beneath impetuous words,

As not dissembling, under measured phrase  
And courtly flatteries, a secret heart  
Cautious and cold,—is this the meed I have?  
Methought she had well known my loyalty,  
But yet 'tis many days that I am here.  
Over her soul must be forgetfulness,  
Drawing its veils upon the days gone by,  
And narrowing loves by dim oblivions,  
As age the entrance of the heart makes cold.  
Woe on these things; she is not great enough  
To be the first forgiver of us twain.  
Being weary of this place, shall I then cede,  
And bow my pride, and kiss the outstretched  
rod,  
Till it be backward drawn, and in its stead  
The lips have guerdon of her royal palm, the  
gage,  
With her that Essex hath his place again?  
Yet hath she soul, whene'er she cares to shew  
Herself as her self is; and her ill will  
Can yet to courtesies turn graciously,  
And tenderly upraise the bended knees.  
There is the promise; she will stay by that:  
The symbol opes the fountains of her heart,  
Bringing her back the days the years have stolen.

*A Boy passes the window.*

Who with light-foot kicks at these gloomy doors,  
 And whistles like a bird as he goes by?  
 'Tis but a boy, what of it? 'tis no news.—  
 A full blue eye and open brow this boy  
 Bears as the pledge of his sincerity.  
 I would the rather trust the jewel to him  
 To take it straight, than to any fawning knave  
 Wont to make promises in all suave speech.  
 Ho, boy!

PAGE. What service doth my lord command?

ESS. Come hither, nearer! 'Tis but a few words  
 Essex would whisper thee, and but small toil  
 Enjoin. Thou see'st this ring of mine, and gold;  
 So thou dost hasten hence and bear the ring  
 Unto the Lady Scroope, with these five words  
 Said clear—"From Essex to the Queen," 'tis  
 done,

The gold is thine, well-earned. Go haste on this.

PAGE. I go, sire, and for this I am full of thanks:—  
 Long live the Earl of Essex and the Queen.

*Exit PAGE.*

ESS. (*solus*). Will she be long in answering? An  
 hour

Do the white wings of her sweet favour wait?  
 Or will she test my patience for a day,



Thinking to have me in suspense a while,  
Before she can forgive with dignity?

The ring was carven in an hour of joy,  
And diamonds were given to it for eyes,  
Whose happy tears gleam hopes in each faint light.  
Upon a golden day it came to me ;  
It goes from me to bring me to the noon  
Of suns yet lovelier. I mind the hour  
When in the summer-time of our two lives  
She gave me pledge of her full faith in me.  
Now let it flash its summer once again,  
New warmth of blood within her slackening  
veins,—

The reconcilment that makes quarrels sweet :  
The sunlight of a gay release to me  
Who yet am young, unused to slothfulness,  
And winter stagnance of imprisoned blood.  
The ring is gone after the sun's own wise,  
That wanes through silence of the darkening eve,  
In brighter morning but to make return.  
Let me be patient in this malady,  
With wan eyes waiting to be flushed with dawn.

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## SCENE II.

*Scene: Without the Tower.*

*Enter PAGE and COUNTESS OF NOTTINGHAM, meeting.*

PAGE. I ween I kneel before the Lady Scroope.

COUNT. Not so; she is my sister; what hast thou  
With her?

PAGE. By grace of my Lord Essex, have  
I errand now to bear to her a ring.

Pardon! my lady, but I fain would ask  
What way to fare, whereby it shall be hers,  
Safe with its proper message at my hands.

COUNT. Enough, boy! I will take the ring: say thou  
The message thou art burdened with, for me,  
Who am her sister, to repeat to her,  
For she is in the palace with the Queen.

PAGE. Lady, unmeetness of a needless toil  
Fain would I lift from thee, and now pursue  
The way of my devoir—

COUNT. I bear the ring.

PAGE. Then if thou wilt the rather have it thus,  
The message is—"From Essex to the Queen."

*Exit PAGE.*

COUNT. Our mighty Essex beating at his bars!  
Craving some guerdon? We should know of this.

I must consult my husband who is wise  
 In matters of such sort as these intrigues.  
 First would I pass that bolted prison-room  
 Wherein is our cage-bird with broken wing;  
 And question if the bars will answer aught,  
 If but in whisper, of this mystery:  
 This is some plotting that we wot not of.

*Exit.*

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SCENE III.

*Scene: Without the door of the Cell. ESSEX is singing within.*

*Enter* COUNTESS OF NOTTINGHAM.

COUNT. (*aside*). The caged bird sings; methought  
 his singing-throat  
 Had been too dry with treason. Hearken him!

SONG.

A little ring of gold,  
 Wove of a slender wire,  
 Is strong enow to hold  
 A heart within its gyre;  
 And is thy heart so old  
 It knoweth not the ring of gold?

A pledge of faith forgot  
 Is as a broken ring ;  
 But ours is broken not,  
 And of thy heart I sing ;  
 It loveth yet, I wot ;  
 Sure is its troth, and breaketh not.

My faith is certain yet,  
 And would give plight to thee ;  
 My heart shall ne'er forget  
 Its Queen, though storms may be ;  
 I sing rejoicing yet,  
 For thy voice quenches all regret.

O flash bright message here,  
 One smiling word for me ;—  
 I keep the old days dear  
 Watching the long mists flee ;  
 But waft thy whispers near,  
 I fall on bended knees to hear.

COUNT. (*aside*). I have the key to all this mystery,  
 I have the light of all this joyousness  
 Safe in my palm, whence the flushed gems athwart  
 These darksome walls flash out their idle hopes,—  
 Breaking their light against the iron bars.

*Passes toward the outer door.*

*Enter* LORD THOMAS HOWARD, *meeting her.*

COUNT. Sir Keeper, greeting! troublous days are these,

Filling your bins with fruit gone overripe :

Soon ripe soon rotten, as the saying is.

See thou hold Essex fast ; he hath escape

Written upon some hopefulnes of heart,

Writ in unseemly merriment and songs.

How. Aye, aye, my Lady ; all the bolts are fast :

The bolts are secret unobtrusive bolts,

But secret things are strong ;—these bolts are sure.

*Exeunt.*

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#### SCENE IV.

*Scene: The Queen's Private Chamber. THE QUEEN seated by the window, absently looking out*

*Enter* LADY MARY MARVEN.

MARV. The court doth never cease to speak of him,

And some do laud him as a gracious man,

To be esteemed above the host of those,

Who by their cunning and their subtle ways

Rise to great heights, but are mean all the while ;

And some are very pitiful for him,

Deeming him wronged and cruelly construed,—  
 Being caught sorely among evil wiles.  
 And these say he is loyal to the core,  
 And bears thee love and hath borne, faithfully ;  
 But I am new to court, and I know not  
 Of this beyond stray-gathered memories.  
 Most say he is not loveable at all,  
 But proud above all men, and overbearing,  
 And dangerous to all who wish thee well ;  
 A fierce upholder of rebellious schemes,  
 Ambitious far beyond allegiance.  
 Who utter this, themselves, are haughty men  
 When peers are by, but when a greater comes,—  
 So courteous-seeming : then they speak soft words  
 And would not whisper any evil tale,  
 Save suitably with caution, for they hide  
 Their hearts beneath a manner full of guile.  
 I cannot but feel sad, somehow, for him,  
 Having once seen him, and I mind his head,  
 Gracious, a little drooped ; and tall fair form ;  
 And—what he hath more beautiful than wont—  
 The slender shapely hands so exquisite.  
 QU. ELIZ. (*rousing herself*). What is all this ? who  
 is this generous man ?  
 Our thoughts had flown afar—forgetting thee—  
 Unto another. Stay, and make us know

His name among them all who pleaseth thee.  
 MARV. Your majesty shall know it is no boy,  
 Among the idle sweethearts of the court,  
 Whom I did praise, but he, so noised about,—  
 My Lord of Essex, at this present, ill  
 In bondage—

QU. ELIZ. Who speaks of Essex unto us?—  
 Get you gone, lady, we would be alone.

*Exit* LADY MARY.

Strange that our thoughts should clash and mingle  
 thus,  
 Like crossing swords above one wellnigh dead :  
 How strange and weary are all things to me !  
 Always was Essex obstinately bound  
 To stiff-necked pride. In what an easy toil  
 Is he involved?—to gleam the golden gage  
 Before mine eyes, assured its memory  
 Brings straight to me old smiles of happy hours,  
 That shine through all the dust of days gone by :—  
 Gleams out this star on me, and liberty  
 Unto himself. The magic of the ring  
 Shakes off his fetters and he comes to us  
 Asking for peace, well-knowing of our heart.  
 Ah, reconcilements are the sweetest things  
 We women wot of. I remember days

When he would fume his passion to an end,  
And with a proud sad smile that asked for peace  
Would send a tremble to my inmost heart,  
Loosen my sternest nerves and guide my palm  
Unto the pressure of his suppliant lips.  
To have in heart sweet memories is sweet,  
But comes there an awakening when we know  
The gleams of life as phantoms wan and vain ;—  
All that were hopes and beauteous within ;  
And that the hollow danger round about  
Is the true daily circle of our lives.

'Tis strange how men can cling to fixed intent,  
And, weighing resolution in the balance,  
Make the scale heavy with contumacy.  
But which is worse ?—We have of the one sort  
This pride, this scorn, and iron stubbornness,  
With flashing candour or of love or hate,  
Ungrateful, unconcealing, like this man.  
Then come men wearisome with chill keen eyes,  
Whose words edge round a meaning made obscure,  
For fear that open purport be perceived.  
What is there among all for one to choose ?  
What for our will to do ? We cannot bow  
Unto this scornful man, who will not ask  
Even of us, a Queen, a favour-gift ;—  
Give but a little ring into our hands,



A little ring that binds us to a word  
Of sudden pardon. Maybe he scorneth this,  
And deems great Abanas and Pharpars, meet  
For such a mighty lord, shall flow from us  
To cleanse and heal him. It is so small a thing,  
But, ah, it binds his life. O Essex, Essex  
Unto what ruin hast thou brought thyself!  
Ah, these are troublous times and bitter days;  
We are encompassed in a hail of points,—  
Each one envenoming where'er it falls.  
They say that there is danger in thy life;  
Methought it sounded but a moment since;  
What shall be done with it? Meseems that bonds  
Befit thee best, or stretch of winter lands  
Spread out between us and thy haughtiness,  
For fear it smite us. Ah, we should take heed,  
And act a wary part in days like these,  
For kindness of heart is thrown away.  
O what a circling chasm is the world,  
Weary and hateful-visaged all about!  
But sorrow is a queen's unworthiness:  
When the crown burns, we should be queenliest  
then,  
And hold strong hand of rule o'er all our land.  
Yet doth he dare to say that we are nought!  
So let that pass. We have a shrunken cheek,



*Enter* EARL OF SALISBURY.

SAL. Your majesty shall pardon if I come  
At an ill-chosen time.

QU. ELIZ. Say nought of it :  
We have a gracious ear for thy good words ;  
Say what thou hast of counsel or of news.

SAL. Your majesty doth not forget, forsooth,  
How that the traitorous Essex, by his bonds  
Made a less dangerous firebrand in the realm,  
Lies under sentence. These strange times are  
such,  
That for the better safety of your people,  
'Twere well some course should be determined on :  
'Tis to be feared escape come of delay.

QU. ELIZ. What counsel would'st thou give in this  
affair ?  
What should be done ?

SAL. Most grave, my liege, is it  
In days like these to give advising words.  
Yield grace to me ward, for meseemeth thus—  
That, to make safety surest, lies there not  
Of other way than death.

QU. ELIZ. Thy cares are wise ;  
We have the nation's safety at our heart.

SAL. I have the warrant then—

QU. ELIZ. Made ready for  
To-morrow, or—say---three days hence, or four :—

SAL. Forestalling such intent I have it here.

QU. ELIZ. Here! here ;—ah, this is promptitude,  
my lord,

For our good's sake this is commendable :  
Thou would'st then leave it for our royal seal  
And signature :—

SAL. There is no haste for this ;

I wait below. My guard is at the gates  
Under command to bear it to due hands ;  
So that the sooner there may be an end  
To all conspiracy, seeing that death  
Faces the front of every traitor's way.

QU. ELIZ. Good my Lord Councillor, is there dis-  
content

Wide o'er the land? Is danger sprouting yet?  
Seemed it to us that plots were stricken and dead,  
And falling faintly like an autumn leaf.

SAL. While such men live with such a vaunting  
tongue,

There is a secret power of smouldering fire  
That circles all of us—mouths that revile  
And flow with treasonous uncivil words.  
Should this dull body of fire come quivering forth  
Into fierce throbs of flame about our heads,

Till our souls fail for fear, would not our teeth  
 Gnash bitterly on thoughts of power unused,  
 That might have quenched it ere it rose to  
 flame?

QU. ELIZ. We trust your wisdom's safeguard in  
 such fears :

Cut sharp the noxious buds.

SAL. Then let the shroud  
 Of cold gray death make wan this poisonous fire,  
 And let not royalty be slander-soiled,  
 As stricken and trembling under prouder power.  
 Danger is to the weak, but what is weak  
 In a Queen's hand upraised ?

QU. ELIZ. Give me the pen :  
 'Tis meet to draw and drop the fateful sword  
 Of severance on this danger. Woe to us  
 An we be not true Queen when cometh need.  
 But stay! There hath a rumour said to us,  
 That, from the bitterness of guilt and wrath,  
 He stores up lies, to let them all flame out  
 When he is led before the world to die.  
 Would he defame our sovereignty, defile  
 Our brows, and in our peoples breed the plague?  
 What shall we do? Were it not wisdom then,  
 In sight of fangs of poison of such sort,  
 That he were closer prisonèd, and kept,

In secret somewhere till he be forgot ?  
 Were this not well ?

SAL. Close fenced about by such  
 As have shut ears and mouths that do not ope,  
 Save for your shining honour, great my liege,  
 He shall meet death—no brother traitor by—  
 Within the Tower. There, if he defame,  
 He shall outcry unto the deaf high wall.

QU. ELIZ. But is he not ill ?

SAL. Hath then this crafty tale  
 Pulsed on the royal ears ? Such counterfeit  
 Of such distemper is meet covering  
 To hide the deadlier ulcer underneath :  
 He would be well so his hand grasped a sword.

QU. ELIZ. The Parchment here ! we fail not as a  
 Queen.

*(signs)* We would be busied now with other need ;  
 Good my Lord Councillor, we give thee thanks.

SAL. All thy sweet radiance o'er a happy realm  
 Shall now the more shine out, that thus is flashed  
 The dread light of thy sceptre. My liege, farewell.

*Exit SALISBURY.*

QU. ELIZ. *(walking quickly to and fro.)* 'Twas with  
 no trembling hand we sealed his fate,  
 Shall he fling in our teeth ! O vaunting lord,



For ye within gray gloom drip solemn tears,  
 But she is sterile-hearted and dry-eyed.  
 What careth she for promises or oaths,  
 Bound firm with wreathen palms that would not  
 part ?

But hers clung close to mine, like as the snake  
 That twines her heart-strings now with perfidy,  
 Hissing to lies her pardon-promises.

Why moan, why moan, for it befits not man ?  
 This woman grieves no whit ; she weepeth not,  
 But, proudly obstinate, though her eyes burn,  
 And straining eyelids seek the ease of tears,  
 Shuts cruelly on her heart a door of iron.  
 'Tis but some other sways her faithlessness,  
 Some beardless flatterer, with suave-set smile  
 And blandly watchful eyes.

Elizabeth,

I trow in this that I have wrought thee wrong,  
 Seeking mine own way to brave out my plans,  
 But after thine own fashion, self-ordained,  
 Unto the earth have I bent down my pride,  
 And of humility have sent thee gage,—  
 An unavailing, unacknowledged thing.  
 If rude or roughly anything I wrought,  
 'Twas for good outcome always. Ne'er toward thee  
 Was treasonous word, or curl of traitor lip ;



'Gainst thee 'twas never! Was my cry too loud,  
'Twas "For the Queen:" beneath this watchword,  
thus

How am I prison-barred? No courtier glib  
In me was bred, or would these bonds be wrought  
Of spirit not of steel, for with sleek lips  
They suck the venom of their own black hearts,  
With lies therefrom to poison other men.  
Them in their strength, I in my innocence  
Can no more shake, being now bereft of power;  
So long kept back that every lie instilled  
Has wrought its poisons to a deadly strength.

Also Elizabeth is crueller than I,  
Seeking to make the wild steed famine-tame:—  
What shall he do but die, and keep his heart?  
She may relent so soon as he be dead;  
She is so changeable one knows her not.  
Her poesie "alwayes one" hath surely jest  
That lurks in it. In letting lapse the days,  
Good, evil, evil, good, as chance leads on  
Through whirls of indecision, sooth is she  
One always, for she lifteth not her hand,  
And dallies, careless of of boot or bale.

These barren walls afford me scope enow,  
In room for thoughts and space for circumstance,  
That, oft aforetime shudderingly put by,

Wheel round in misty circles through the glooms,  
And crowd the heart up. Very walls do speak,  
And they could preach long time, O Queen, on this,  
How once thou had'st a heart so kindly fed,  
It could not but forgive, but now the hours,  
That link us twain for a short space on earth,  
Grown aged as thy heart, are winter-cold,—  
Meting their measure of despair to both.

Thus for the world whose part in me is over,  
As I pass from it on the cruel way,  
That is before mine eyes, made black and red  
With my shed blood. Fade earth, and go from me,  
For thou art spent; in thee there is no joy.  
Life's phantoms pass. Alone with dreams and  
death—

A star comes gleaming through a crevice small,  
Lighting the caverns-depths where I was lost,  
Within the pitfalls cruel foes did stake.  
Ireland was one; and now by dexterous lies  
My arm, 'gainst them upraised, is twisted round  
As threatening Elizabeth, whose hurt  
I never sought to compass. Ah, who knows,—  
There are so many of them—there are none  
Who hide in holy garbs to work me ill?  
I mind that crafty Ashton who beguiled  
By his false sympathies, and 'neath the veil

Of my soul's casing dared to entangle me.  
 O bitter perfidies! Though these men came,  
 Taking my chains and giving me their power,  
 Still would I be myself, and, pure of hand,  
 Cling to my bonds as to a great reward.

All is not lost; I feel my throbbing heart  
 O'erladen with its sins and idle wrongs,  
 But pure of meditated evil deeds:  
 And one star brightens all the gloomy skies;  
 And as a sun that makes the stars die out,  
 Is the great King to all earth's sovereignties;  
 And his wide arms they are so full of love,  
 They have bright reconciliation written clear,  
 Unchangeably. May they sustain my feet  
 When they are hurried o'er death's precipice,  
 And the great scene of earth is void of me.  
 Yet is it bitter, thus to wait for death.  
 How drearily drags the February day,—  
 This second month more weary than the last;  
 This second year more bitter than the first,  
 Since the dire fateful change of century!  
 Sounds are about. Sure any change were well.

*Enter* LORD THOMAS HOWARD.

How. My Lord of Essex, 'tis your day to escape:  
 My bolts disgorge you into bitterer hands.

Ess. What? Message from Elizabeth? Say, what?

*Enter OFFICER and GUARD.*

OFF. Prisoner, beneath the law's due sentences,  
My duty brings me hither. Loose the chains,  
My men; and you, sir, follow hence to death.

Ess. Death! but I sent unto Elizabeth  
A messenger to treat, and is there nought  
Of answering thereto?

How. Here is her hand  
Set with unshaking weight upon the page  
That is thy doom. 'Tis thus she answereth.

OFF. Thus is right meted to conspirators.

Ess. An arm, some one; I follow unto death.  
Ah, what a death is this, Elizabeth!

*Exeunt.*

---

SCENE VI.

*Scene: A Corridor in the Palace.*

*Enter COUNTESS OF NOTTINGHAM and LADY MARY MARVEN,  
meeting.*

COUNT. We have one traitor less. How calm he  
died,  
Black with the sins that were upon his heart!

Cecil had audience of the Queen just now ;  
She looketh fair, he saith, now all is saved,  
And happy peoples fear not, the land through.

MARV. Seems she to me toil-worn and weary-souled ;  
And broken sleep she catches bit by bit,  
Starting with unused words that seem to come  
From days gone by ; then chafes and wearies her :  
I fear me much lest she be overwrought.

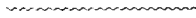
COUNT. Her dear sweet majesty ! Have thou all  
care,  
My girl, her regal brows to ease and soothe,  
Pillowing her head upon a bed of down.  
My husband calls ; my devoirs to the Queen.

*Exit.*

MARV. What strange small eyes she hath, they drive  
me mad :  
Soul of sweet Essex, 'tis an evil world.

*Exit.*

## T H R E E   S T A G E S .



### THE FIRST MILE-STONE.

ETHRED.

I MEAN to follow stedfast course  
Through good report and ill,—  
A river winding from its source  
Clear waters of good will.

My own heart filled with love toward all  
Who are about me, they shall be  
Like sweetest summer rains that fall,  
And shed content and joy on me.

CASIMO.

I will not bend to gold or fame,  
Or fawn the uplift hand of power,  
But where I mark a noble aim,  
My head shall droop like a meek flower.

My soul is eager for the fray,  
My flag is streaming to the wind ;  
Let each shed glory o'er the way,  
And pluck the blossoms he shall find.

ROLF.

Life is a various-burdened shoot,  
Whose bunches hang for all to cull,  
With sodom-apples and good fruit  
Close intertwined, they are so full.

The eldest one, I say no say,  
But three buds from this green bough take ;  
Part we, but until meeting-day  
Let each have one for his keepsake.

---

THE HALF-WAY HOUSE.

CASIMO.

O stay me not ; ye see that knave,  
He stole my coat with honours three  
The finger of the emperor gave ;  
O stay me not, lest he get free.

ETHRED.

Well, what of thee? For my sad part  
I have no purposes at all;  
Long weariness lies on the heart,  
And every sweet is mixt with gall.

ROLF.

I work, but 'tis no easy toil  
To know the work that is the best;  
How shall one finger and not soil?  
And there come times one longs for rest.

---

NIGH THE END OF THE JOURNEY.

ROLF.

We came together long ago  
With each a blossom in his hand;  
My son heirs mine, but Casimo,  
Thou art young-faced and bland.

CASIMO.

What boots it thus thou summonest  
The empty phantoms of our youth?  
Such dreams befit the boyish breast;  
Grey-beards, let us be wise forsooth.



ETHRED.

'Tis weary widening the strait,  
And dreams and living do not fit :  
Death broodeth o'er me, and I wait,  
Half-hoping other life from it.

---

L'ENVOI.

The light is on the mountains yet,  
And full of sun-glow is the land ;  
Love needeth but to ask, to get,  
Yet cometh to no idle hand.

Each seed thou sow'st within the earth  
Is tripled into hidden fruit :  
The one grain gives thine own heart's mirth,  
Thy brother eats, and God hath yet the root.

# HYPATIA CHRYSOSTOMA.

A PICTURE.

---

**N**O patron crowd whose influence moulds or  
mars,

No ordered groove wherein the feet must stay,  
No dread authority with heart in bars,  
But base of truth wide open to the day.

Unshrinking purpose through the woman's heart  
Fail fainting as the strong afflatus flows :  
Borne by the mission brave she acts her part,  
To mould that fire that cometh—whence, who  
knows ?

No gathered store of shielding argument,  
No fear of question snarled by bitter tooth ;  
But ever answer, ere she search, is sent,  
Upspringing straightway from the well of truth.

Rapt listening souls with upturned eyes aflame ;  
Sweet flower-words falling, golden honey-sprays ;  
No sound save from the fountain, while the aim  
Of each grows highèr as he hears and prays.

# SISTER ALICE.

## A CLOISTER PICTURE.



### THE DEATH-LIFE.

OUT on gray-shadowed cloister-aisles  
She gazed alone,  
For none was near and none was dear  
To her heart waxed like to stone ;  
And image none, save void and drear,  
On her o'ertranquil eye was thrown.

The girdle of untrellised wall  
Kept summer out ;  
One barren space of grass to pace—  
Footworn and bit with drought—  
Is its sole symbol in that place,  
To love, and, loving, muse about.

Deep valleys and beloved hills  
Her child-time knew,  
When day by day went its sweet way  
Beneath skies brightly blue,  
And love made sullen winter gay  
As ever summerwards she flew.

Nought save a wide bare plain outlies  
Beyond these walls,  
Without retreat for birds' light feet  
Save eaves of sacred halls ;  
And ne'er sweet song or whisper sweet  
Within the range of echo falls.

Upon the uncarved window-ledge  
She findeth rest ;—  
Silent and meek, with one cold cheek  
Upon the thin hand prest ;  
And her slack heart-chords vainly seek  
With long-lost music to be blest.

The grayish shadow o'er the air  
Makes wan her lips,  
And on her eyes no sweet surprise  
Its liquid lustre drips ;  
The light anon within God's skies  
To-day a cloud's dark finger strips.

## ONE SPRAY FROM A FADED SPRING.

What is the sound without the gate ?  
Whose feet are these,  
That have no dread to press and tread,  
Where shrink the very bees  
To light, since there blows no flowerhead,  
Or yellow blossoming of trees ?

A lutist dared to breathe without,  
Whose notes dispread,  
With joy did pour the bare walls o'er,  
As if young spring had led  
Her maidens to a dreary shore,  
To ease it of its drearihead.

They found faint echo in her soul,  
So long unused  
To quicker beat of music sweet,  
Than, as the hours wore, oozed  
From the hoarse bell that bade to meet ;  
And in the resonance she mused.

The death-life clung about her yet,  
And some sad chaunt

Essayed to float from her faint throat,  
But joys her soul did haunt,  
Suchwise, that, mingling note with note,  
Came dreams half-death and half-romaunt.

---

## THE PICTURE IN THE MUSIC.

A vision floated in her eyes,  
Athwart the years,  
Hued rose and white with strokes of light,  
But dim with many tears ;  
A maid's form rises fair and bright,—  
Her old self, as old tones she hears.

Once,—was it many years ago,  
Of days forgot ?—  
The laugh of spring in her heart did ring,  
And linked love's crimson knot,  
With meshèd sweets to say or sing  
To music of the angelot.

The strings that bound her soul were full  
Of glowing fire,  
That music spread o'er heart and head,  
Till one snapped golden wire

Gave out a shriek, as from the dead,  
Amid the joynotes of the choir.

Then, one man's eyes were on her face,  
Love-soft and true,  
But now—gray-cold with thoughts untold—  
Another's pierced her through,  
And a strange shivering whisper rolled  
From him, that did her soul imbrue.

She saw the gloom of his draped form  
Throw a black shade  
Upon the dream, till all did seem  
Into one ruin made ;  
His words so scorching might she deem  
As once again now utterèd.—

“ God hath no service in thy joy ;  
In sobs and prayer,  
In close control of a bruised sad soul,—  
Alone is heaven there ;  
Lies on a tear-swept path the goal,  
For love and music are despair.

“ Not for thee sole is spun and wove  
The garment death,



But for his pain thou dost enchain,  
In the low singing breath,  
Is gathered deadly flower of bane ;  
And each the other poisoneth."

The breath slipped from his smoothèd mouth  
Like a cold fire ;  
And as a sword was each his word,—  
As if death's sceptre dire  
Smote cruelly life where'er it stirred,  
Where'er it quivered to suspire.

She saw the phantom of herself  
Act her sad part,  
With the evil net before her set,  
And snares curled round her heart ;  
The living and the dead days met ;  
In her old self she seemed to smart,

And droop as that priest, day by day,  
Beneath God's crown  
Of love and awe thrust cunning law,  
To bind her spirit down ;  
A thorn, her maiden blood to draw,—  
Sharp, where the streams had warmest grown.

Her bruised heart-blossoms saw she blanch,  
As winter bound,  
In one white frost, things gained and lost,  
And gathered close around  
Pale cloudland with one black bar crost,—  
Void fields with no sweet river-sound.

She bade farewell her lover's joy,  
His soul to save,  
And for her own joy that had flown,  
She, helpless, drave and drave  
Precept to heart, till love's last moan  
Seemed breathe out, as God would have.

She saw the spells that monk had brought  
To crush her will,—  
His benison or malison  
The sole fit water-rill,  
Wherefrom a maiden, shrunk half-nun,  
Must draw the chalice Heaven doth fill.

---

THE LOST DREAM-LIGHT.

The music ceased. As when well-drops  
That crisp and curl,

Caught as they drip on a fevered lip—  
Cold sweet pearl-drop by pearl—  
Fail unforwarned, and earthward slip,  
The thirstier pulses throb and whirl

More burningly. So spasms stabbed  
Her opened heart,  
Till yearnings dire filled her with fire,  
And every vein did smart :  
Faint overblushed with new desire,  
The frozen pallors shrink and start.

Her soul awakens to a thirst,  
That craves and burns  
For tears to weep from strings asleep,  
And all her being learns  
New strokes of fear, lest none should sweep  
Again those strings whence life returns.

The music and the dream had shared  
One overflow,  
As, poured around, the sad strains wound,  
Until the cup of woe  
Seemed brimmed again. But, now, spent sound  
Scarce echoes in adagio.

Her beating heart rends off its bonds :  
 The portal-key,  
 All dull with rust she snatched and thrust—  
 That none should pry and see—  
 Close to her breast,—as one who must,  
 Flying half-joy, half-fearfully.

Down long cold stairs and through harsh gates,  
 She findeth way,  
 Questing the lute that hath been mute  
 This long long sunless day,—  
 That now makes barren its salute  
 By dying.—Hark ! a roundelay !

---

THE SONG OF THE LUTE.

“Why wait, why wait in the gloom-bound gate,  
 When thy love is come,  
 And the life it hath fled that about thy head  
 Wove tangles wearisome ?  
 Come to a choir that joy hath led,  
 Come hither, to love’s breast and home.

How bright the barren lands about,  
 With new bud bloom,—

To be fairer yet as the steed doth set  
His foot away from gloom :  
New may-time and new morn have met,  
New days to weave from a new loom.

I hear thy foot touch, stone by stone,  
The long cold ways,  
Like a hushed song that flows along,  
To lighten tedious days :  
Ah, sweet ! thy face shall not be long,  
Ere it declare its lingering Mays.

Sweet love, how bitter-long the hours,  
For my sheathed blade,  
That might not slake its eager hate,  
In breasts whose coward aid  
Was cross and stole. So long to wait !  
Yet love lived on spite cold words said."

---

THE ANSWER TO THE SONG.

"My head, so weary, pillowing  
Upon thy breast,—  
The bitter years wash out in tears,  
The soul comes to its rest ;

God's heaven-vista reappears,  
That hath been hidden to my quest."

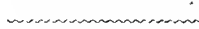
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THE MUSIC OF FLIGHT.

List to the charger's eager feet  
Upon the stones ;  
As swift he bounds, what sharp sweet sounds  
Ring out like music tones !  
What bliss may birds find, where no hounds  
Scent spoil, and bay the dovelets' moans !

The inward of that portal drear  
Saw ne'er as yore,  
The maid faint-fair kneel at her prayer,  
The drear skies to implore :  
A gladness gathered in the air,  
And skies shed roses evermore.

## LE GRAND EXILÉ.



A N island small, exiled from either shore,  
Between whose sands the broad sea-channels  
pour ;  
A spare white house of unaccustomed form,  
By barren clifflands scarred with wrath of storm—  
Hither came, driven by an evil fate,  
For refuge, and a purer day to wait,  
A father and a son.

The father saith,  
“ It may be long that we are here,—till death :  
What shalt thou do to speed the weary time ?”  
To whom the son “ Take I the pictured prime  
Of those great days that Shakespeare made and sung,  
To make them glow beneath our southern tongue,—  
A worthy labour for a long work-day ;  
And thou, my father, what shall be thy stay ?  
What is for thee, while we two linger here,  
To fill the voidness of the barren year ?”

Then the old man raised his imperial head,  
And, turning toward the keen salt breeze, he said  
Few words and sad for answering—" For me,  
I shall look out upon the restless sea."

Tempests and calms and many a summer's air  
Have stirred and soothed him alway whitening there;  
And through blind mists the old man's eyes divine  
Look like lone stars upon the circling brine.  
His soul hath gone upon the toilsome foam,  
And the great oceans where our woes have home,  
And singeth he of fate, and flings afar  
A holy wrath of waves triluminar,  
In word and act and song that hurl fire-spray  
Upon the grovelling emperies of clay;—  
Down unto dead cold caverns pouring light,  
In dark abysms letting day on night.  
His lyre is heard above the breakers' din;  
The music of his passion poureth in  
Upon our hearts the broad sea-colourings,  
And his large love createth beauteous things,  
Barred with great wealth of sunlight whose strong  
    rays  
Cast from us meaner things and purblind days.  
'Tis to make fetters of the frail sea-foam  
To exile him to whom the world is home :



Across the waves he holdeth forth his palm,  
Bright as a curled shell in the water calm,  
When the clear wave melts over it, in light  
Of maiden stars that smile down fair and white.  
Looking from heights where all free airs are curled,  
A wearied eagle—on a slavish world ;  
Kings' prison-houses fail beneath his scorn ;  
Freedom lifts head that so long earth hath worn.  
King in his freedom o'er a race of free,  
His word is aiding, and his soul a key  
To open hearts and plant his passion there,  
And buds that blow within his own free air.  
Thence comes the lustre of his crown of bays,  
Mingling and twining with those buds always.  
Wreathe him and crown him in his own great light  
That calls out noble deeds from ancient night :  
Wreathe him and crown him with the hearts of us,  
In fragrant sprays and buds mellifluous,  
That ours take glow of his, and freedom be  
With kingdom sea-girt by no narrow sea.

LE TRAVAILLEUR DE LA MER.

---

FROM out my palace on the roof,  
My glass-walled tower within the skies,  
I see the earliest dawns arise  
On summer and on winter sea :  
I am alone and free.

Pacing my chamber of the roof,  
I see the faint white flower of foam  
Just blossom forth, or madly roam,  
Beseeching heaven utterly :  
I am alone and free.

Bound by a mystic warp and woof,  
I have the world within my hands ;  
And pregnant waves from divers lands  
Roll down between the skies and me :  
I am alone and free.

The sun doth arch above my roof  
His morning footstep from the wave,  
Until within a bosky grave,  
His weary eye shuts dreamily :  
I am alone and free.

The seasons pass me on the roof,  
With all the torment of the wind,  
And all the passions it can bind,—  
None greater than is bound in me,  
Who am alone and free.

And oft on me upon the roof,  
They heap the burden of a song,  
And lucent rays let steal along,  
From under mists, that come to me  
Who am alone and free.

Down to my chamber of the roof  
Sweet balm is wafted from blue skies,  
And odours from blue waves arise,  
In married fragrance circling me,  
Who am alone and free.

The infinite above my roof  
Sends questing down a human cry ;  
The waves pile voices up on high,

They throb my soul and ask of me  
Who am alone and free.

The wistful cloudlet by the roof,  
Will crave the secret of my breast,  
And mingle, with the man's unrest,  
The Isis-soul that comes to me  
Who am alone and free.

She comes and tarries half-alooft  
Shy-glancing with a maid's surprise ;  
With her unfathomable eyes  
She asketh of, and answers me  
Who am alone and free.

She brings new strands of warp and woof  
To wreathe o'er all the evil past ;  
The sunlight shall flash out at last,  
And God lay His fair hand on me  
Who am alone and free.

## VIRGO QUIES.

---

SHE cometh as sunrays to springtime,  
And soft as the fall of a leaf  
In air that is drowsy with grief;  
As dew in the drouth she cometh.

She hovereth over my pillow,  
And sooths me each toil-mark away;  
Before sleep has bridged to the day,  
The dream of her love entereth.

Her fingertips tenderly touch me,  
Anoint me with careless balm;  
I revel in oceans of calm;  
She kisses a dreamy caress.

She thrills gentle breath o'er the soul-chords,  
And music is kindled therein;  
Her rapture she wafts from within,  
In lullaby magicalness.

Albeit she cometh not ofttimes,  
She ever is longing to bless,  
Her whisper is tenderness,—  
Warm breathing that melts o'er my sighs,

That they shiver for once and for ever,  
Unwinding their burthen of cares,  
Flit away and are gone as light airs,  
To a song full of soul-melodies.

She bears me on wings of her lovelight,  
Away from the regions of pain ;  
As the sunray looks down on the rain,  
I look on the teardews that were.

She giveth the soul a soft nurture,  
And beareth it angels among ;  
Her glances do yearn to be young ;  
Long waiting is hopeful in her.

She liveth in mountains untrodden  
By aught save the wing-feet of winds ;  
She whispers me "Come," and she binds  
All thorns out of sight of the eyes.

I come, but 'tis only in fancy—  
The twilight where fables are ;—  
Fate slants a deep night as a bar,  
And bound of my dream-paradise.

Alas, were I able to wed her,  
To taste all the joy of her love,  
Capriciously then would she move,  
And lap me in long drowsihead.

I love her the deeper, the more that  
She leaveth me till I am weak,  
And weary, then gives me her cheek  
To kiss, and again is she sped.

I know not how rightly to woo her ;  
She giveth a brother to teach ;  
His lessons are on the rough beach,  
Not where the wave lulls into ease.

I ask him, I pray him to teach me  
The end of his burthensome coil ;  
He smileth, her brother of toil,  
And points to things nobler than these.

He points to the birth, to the growing  
Of stature from out of restraint ;  
To stay by the way is to faint,  
And awake to what others have done.

I will work for the love of his sister ;  
Her teaching my soul would obey ;  
I look to the end of the way  
Where brother and sister are one.

*April, 1867.*



## A DREAM OF EYES.

---

A DREAM of eyes restless, unknowing  
Whereunto speeds the star of the birth;  
Whose earnestness strives to be going  
To find its true place upon earth,  
Where the soul shall meet fullness and enter no  
valley of dearth.

A dream of hot eyes running over  
From fountains of virginal pain,  
When the heart's quick is bruised, and the lover  
Fears all his enchantments are vain,  
And that life is but stabbing for gold in arenas of  
brain.

A dream of dry eyes losing hopelight,  
As the soul seemeth further from God,  
Driven out from its dreamland of pasture—

A vale of lost beauty—to plod  
Through its quiet defiled, o'er its grasses worn  
down to the sod.

Amid dust from the journeying hillwards,  
And cries from the bruise of the rocks,  
Stedfast eyes catch a gleam whose illuming  
Is not as a marsh-light that mocks,  
But kindles the heart to forgetting of earth-born  
shocks.

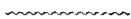
A dream of eyes calm as gray morning,  
When the sun thinks again of the dew,  
And that look on the gloom o'er-inveiled  
As cloud-sky whose lining is true,  
Whose task is to shadow the light that is awful to  
view.

A dream of eyes turned from the prison,  
Away from the chasms of sin,  
To a sky lit with stars new-arisen  
As brothers to beckon them in,  
To where souls bloom as roses, and gnaweth no  
palmer within.

*May, 1867.*

## MOODS.

### DIRGE — PÆAN.



#### I.

A STIFLED thunder rolls along an air  
So passionlessly dark in folded flakes  
Of gloom, that lightning's azure never breaks  
Its silent great monotony, despair ;

But threefold surges from a former woe  
Feed the sad clouds, until their chills are pressed,  
In circling fogs of winter, on the breast,  
Whose beating groweth wearisome and slow.

Should one to dreams of brighter shores be fleet,  
All vistas, straight, are closed dark doors of shade ;  
The night-cloud gathers o'er the brightest glade,  
A shingled strand is toilsome to the feet,

And nerveless pilots steer a dead-heart flight,  
After the fruit of an abhorrent tree,  
That is as fair as rest in toil, to see,  
But, gathered, gall and bitter dust to bite.

The skies weep out their darkness o'er the moon,  
The spirit saileth sadly under stars  
Whose light is quenched, and as a bark whose  
spars  
The sails have tangled and the blasts have hewn,

It outruns hope, and, losing course, it dips,  
With strained answers to the straining breeze,  
Unto the anger and the lash of seas,—  
Sucked down with laden hull to great curved lips

Of billows opening unto ooze-black caves,  
That yawn their longing for the downward bound  
Of the great shivering mass, that death creeps  
round,  
And sullen swell of the enfolding waves.

The beaten hulk is wrestling through the hours  
That drag it down ; the light upon the prow  
Is dim,—the life-clue sunk where the frowned brow  
Of surge seemed calmest, underneath foam flowers.

A soul is in the snares ; its weakly cries  
Wail forth, in bitterness of smothered birth,  
From lonely far depths of the ancient earth,  
Moaning like sough of storm-sob ere it dies.

The shrunken heart is cold, and tremulous  
Is each its fainting breath, through hungered sense  
Too early-born, for fruit, that too intense  
For this our nursery-life, doth grow for us,

Waiting our coming to the garden dells  
Where hath its perfect noon a changeless sun,  
And all earth pains or gains we lost or won,  
A waning echo to the rapture tells.

Shall dream upraise us to abiding light ?  
Doth it not shudder, and again grow gray  
Unto the deadness of a fog-blind day ?  
For silvern hope doth rust herself with night,

And scorns her azure hues as only dream,  
And, if life hinteth that the sun is near,  
Thrusts back its tremblings to the arms of fear  
Ye angels looking Godwards, could ye gleam,

From out your calm-eyed gaze, one crystal dew  
 Of sympathy, would ye then find love flown  
 For this? but—drawing tears unto your own—  
 Would not the tearful yield their souls to you?

Ah, me, we die not though alone, alone,  
 And faint for breath. O God, thy love outwears  
 The woes and waitings of the dim-hued years,  
 And, breathed on souls, binds all unto thine own.

Lighten our eyes whereon earth-shadows move,  
 And mystery of cloud: wreath pride with bitter  
 rue,  
 Yet ever give, O soul of all, unto  
 The faint and weary of the storm thy love.

## II.

Brow-wreathed in garlands that bud forth between  
 The spirit's fever and the dew of tears,  
 Gaily I float through open morning years,  
 Knowing no eventide. The heavens glean

The scattered wanderings of lapsèd tears  
 Into sigh-laden clouds, that float afar  
 Unto the bourne of sadnesses that were,—  
 Fleeing the sunlight as the morning nears.

I see a life within the crucible,  
And dream that holy streams flow forth and roll,  
In rills of gold from furnaces of soul,--  
Out-seething from the glooms of night whose spell

Is backward drawn. Great hope, thou art divine,  
And thy aspiring glorious, though thou art  
But as the stolen glance hid sunbeams dart ;  
A strange vain thing, brave-born thyself to thine,

But weakly-footed on a world of ice,  
With trembling knees and garments that are sad ;  
Whereas they shone all glorious and glad  
In purple broidery of thine own device.

What is it when the straining eyeballs freeze,  
And heart-throbs thicken with a louder beat,  
When from the rushing winds of thoughts o'er-fleet  
To 'scape the clinging calm, the scared blood flees,

Swaying hot veins with swollen eddyings,  
And heaves the breast until it scarce contains  
The vibrant soul, whose every longing strains  
For utter loosing from all grosser things ?

When from soul-plenitude intensity  
    Forgeth to flame an azure spark, a lyre  
    Whose strings would flash from peak to peak of  
        fire,  
To heights of olden dreams divine and free ;

And, purged from dust of crowded years gone by,  
    Tremble in sheen like moon-pearls on the brine,  
    Full-harmonied to music notes divine,  
Whence grief doth steal bright crystal wings to fly.

Patience! thou goddess swathed in dew-dark hopes,  
    To what star dost thou point that covereth  
    Its rays in hiding of the years and death ?  
When wilt thou cease to gall us with thy ropes ?

Hope, that dost blush the ashy glooms with joy,  
    Ride forth on lightnings, fleet with rosy wings,  
    To slake deep thirst in life's imaginings  
That break in flower, afar from cold alloy.

What be white streams of words?—but rush  
    Of phantom thoughts that float along the hours ?  
    Are earth's faint rainbow smiles our only flowers ?  
Is hope not garnered for a broad-noon gush



Of fullness? Is it ill to scan the gray  
That shroudeth us as yet, and look for light  
Beyond the seen, as one through feverous night  
Waits with hot lips the coming of the day?

Thus burns wan flame to Godward, and we go  
Bearing aloft our strivings up the steep,  
But aye borne down by tears of those that weep;  
Ah me, O brother weary ones, ye know.

*April and June, 1867.*

SLAVE'S SONG TO FREEDOM.

---

GIVE me to be calm as air,  
The eve maketh cool from the fierce sun's  
glare,  
If so be it is well to give up, to forget  
The wild budding blossoms that garland thy hair.

Give me to be wild, to be free,  
As the wind-blast that furrows long deserts of sea,  
If so be it is well to uprear, to upset  
The dark mountain-wave that weighs weary on me.

Give me not to be deathly and drear as a shore,  
Where the cloud hangeth ever, unbroken by roar,  
Born of might and of thunder, to sport with the  
brine  
And hurl life at its deadness. O unchain my door :

Give me either the rest that in joy is calm-browed,  
Or rain on me flame-points, to rend night her shroud,  
But leave me not sunk on the barren long line,  
Winds yield to dead calm, stars and sun to a cloud.

29 *June*, 1867.

'ΑΝΑΓΚΗ.

---

**O** DIRE and awful vision of affright,  
Art thou then yet alive, to make the heart  
Quake in the midnight hour, when as from dream  
It starts, arising out of a dead sleep  
Unto a shivering consciousness of thee?  
Art thou not wearied of the formless years,  
That thou hast clothed thyself in shape anew,  
After thy day to haunt the world again?  
Why rendest thou the soul with iron goads,  
That close around it that it may not 'scape  
Thy blood-red fingers, but in pallid fear  
Freeze till the life hang by one heart-drop left?  
Did'st thou not slip into the empty death  
Of the old gods, or fall and melt away  
With chains that drank of our forefathers' hearts?  
Why frownest thou upon us with dark brows  
That shadow caverns that have lost their light,  
Till the life shuddereth, as with a fiend

Sucking the soul out cruelly by the lips,  
With all bright hopes ?

O God, let me escape  
From fearful visionings of men fate-bound  
Unto all foulness. Save, O save from thoughts  
That tread dismay upon the soul aghast,—  
Spectres despiteous with sullen hate.  
They have been with us, doth the better day,  
Gathered and gathering from fairer skies,  
Blot them all out as if they had not been ?  
O wherefore loose from bonds the deathful thing,  
That draws such shroud upon our eyes they see  
Nought but a preying foulness where was life,  
Nothing but death and an all-darkened tomb ?  
Banish, O heaven, the shape that frighteth me.  
Now, passionless with deadly gleaming eyes;  
Broods it on breaths of the avenging years ;  
Now, borne upon resistless wings, speeds on,  
Fearful with claws that cling and clutch the soul ;  
That wake it sleeping in the vales of love,  
And hurl it, writhing, from its dream-fast hold,  
On rocks whence is none other outlet save  
Below to death, above unto despair.  
Lashing fire-forks around, it whirleth us  
Into its cavern depths, where never heard  
Is a sweet sound, but sighs and dire lament

Gnaw in the heart with a remorseless tooth ;  
 Far lonesome depths, where never is a smile,  
 Or voice of any, but the jarring air  
 Rings harsh with moans and woe it cannot tell.

Art thou of our begetting, O thou fate ?  
 Why fear we then, O thou that art the child  
 Of palsied fancies and of shuddering doubts ?  
 Would that a lightning flash of doom might burn  
 Thine image from our world, thy fearful wings  
 From our dark skies. O let my soul return  
 To the great presence that is somewhere nigh,  
 Too vast to see,—the Master of the feast  
 That showers on us blossoms of young morns,  
 And bridal flowers of many a pure child-life,  
 And dews untainted on the hearts of love.  
 O thou, that art the wellspring-head of all  
 Our dreams ; sole pasturage of balm the while  
 We roam our lives of mingled smiles and tears,  
 Hurl back this phantom-form and let us breathe.

What art thou, Fate, what art thou unto us ?  
 We see thee brooding o'er fair sunny lands,  
 Blighting the plants and poisoning the dews,  
 And binding barren famine upon love.  
 O but to see the angel that shall wage  
 A noble war against thee, hurling down  
 Thy shattered power into a dark abyss,

Unutterable, where thy fierce flame hair,  
Snake-coiled, shall hiss into a venomous death,  
In the cold waters that are left to thee  
For ever.

It were heaven to see arise,  
From the wide sanguine fields where thou hast  
wrought

Thy glooms of desolation, fair young forms  
Made perfect from thy fire, and cleansed  
From black defilement to a noble end!  
But what day bringeth it, when shall it be?  
The gloom broods over, yet I do believe  
That we shall wash our wounds within a spring  
Of ancient mysteries and of love old-new,  
Made pure again, O God, when in thy arms,  
Whence came we having sin and death to learn.

Give us to see thy hand and cling to it,  
In the long days whose darkness is but tinged  
By glimmer of clean flame around the world,  
Burning the clinging mires to dust and death,  
Amid the breaths of a pure holy air.

*July 17th, 1867.*

## QUEEN SYMPATHY.

Σύν μοι πίνε, συνήβα,  
συνέρα, συνστεφανηφόρει,  
σύν μοι μαινομένω μαίνεο,  
συνσωφρονήσω σωφροني.

Ἄδελποτον.

Ἡύλησαμεν ὑμῖν, καὶ οὐκ ἀρχήτασθε·  
ἐθρηνήσαμεν ὑμῖν, καὶ οὐκ ἐκόψασθε.

Ευαγγ; κατα Ματθαιον. xi. 17.

Οὔτοι συνέχθειν, ἀλλὰ συμφιλιῶν  
ἔφυν.

Σοφ: Αντιγ:

QUEEN SYMPATHY,—that makest all men  
kin,  
And linkest joy with joy, and pain with pain;  
Love's nursing-mother to us, child thyself  
Of the infinite love that as a wingèd steed  
Circles the stars and suns and girth of heaven;—  
Hail thou, for thou art worthy to be sought;  
Thy breath is germ to all our fairest flowers!  
Lighting a pathway through the hopeless mires,  
Thou ledest on the steps of many men  
Whom others' hands uphold from being weak,—  
The coward heart being brave in brotherhood.



When thou hast given all thy love to man,  
Springs from his soul a tree whose ample arms  
Gather in like embrace the young and old,  
The richer with the poorer, bond with free ;  
And from the branches do the years drop flowers,  
Celestial-hued as blossoms in a dream,  
Gracious as streams whose founts are fed with balm ;  
A banyan-growth is it o'er sterile plains.

Twin-born as lightning-flash between two souls,  
Thou burnest as a crystal in the sun,  
Unquenched though years fling gathering darkness  
o'er,

And alien clouds should misinterpret light.  
O manna-sympathy, the food oft-times  
Dropped down from heaven on long-borne hun-  
gering ;—

Joining earth's pleasures with an equal hand,  
In many a silent martyrdom of life  
Thou hast thy fullness, meaning most divine.  
Thou lookest not on ignorance askance,  
Or thinkest evil of the wayless man,  
But, in a mingling like to sun and rain,  
Exhalest with thy tears the clouds that blind  
The heavy-footed in a marsh of doubt ;—  
Being not turned to wrath at any sin,  
But sorrow rather, for thy soft eye's charm

Is many-meaning, looks from deep to deep,  
And loves the beauty ere it sees the foul.  
Warm as the sun-breaths of a southern May,  
Thy smiles bear aiding love unto the weak,  
And all the lowly ones are near thy throne ;  
Thy glances are as spring that scorneth not  
To bless each tiny grass that loves the sun.  
O come, thou dweller in the groves of God,  
Come, let us lay our weary heads on thee,  
For we are blinded in the secret ways  
Where darkness hovers over light. O come,  
To shew the shelter that is given to us  
In one another's arms ; and lead our feet,  
Thus stayed and strong, unto thy ways sublime.  
Thou art made timid by the scornful world,  
And seek'st untrodden groves where thou may'st find  
Hungers unfed, and thirst that no man knows :  
Yet leave us not, but draw thy chains around,  
And bind us heart to heart, and pulse with pulse,  
To all the beauty and the love of good,  
Prompting our souls to deeds that may outspan  
The nameless fields wherein their germs were born.  
Alas, the wasted hearts, the arid soil,  
The seedland barren as a long lament,—  
Fruitless, and fevered into troublous wilds  
That bear the weed and know not of the flower !

O thou, the first dew-fall of fruitfulness,  
Aid us to ripe the blossom of thy love  
Unto sweet flower and sun-warm loveliness,—  
To balm for hunger and to wine for thirst.

O come as angel to the burdened heart,  
And save it from the weariness of good  
Long-sought, unfound to bless the hungering.  
O save it from the joyous-seeming paths  
Where evil gildeth weary things with life,  
And, by the glamour of a charmèd draught,  
Hides for a short noonday the phantom shape  
Whose pallid eyes, as glitters fade and wane,  
A fearful mockery gibe, and far from shore  
Allure the soul upon yet wearier seas,  
Whose unrest dreameth not of calm again.  
O save us, for thou art our boon of God,  
That is to lead us toward him thro' all days,—  
Our light of pitying unforgetful skies,  
That break all gloom-linked chains midway, and far  
Bid all the darksome clouds be scatterèd.

Burdens thou sharest, drawing heavy woes  
Into thine own soft bosom, whither flow  
Our burning tears, which with thine own sweet grief  
Commingled, dost thou soothe to tranquillness  
And patient love ; yielding thine heart as balm  
To cool the suffering of scorched belief.

Upraising wearied eyes in a new light,  
Thou givest to drink the first awakening,  
Making men see thee pointing to the skies  
Through some small flower-bud of a brother's heart.  
Though see we but a tardy growth and weak,  
We cannot reach to thy infinity,  
And faintly scent from far thy fragrant bloom  
That clothes immortally the happy stars.

Scattering the rosy coverlids of sleep,  
When wilt thou come and bud with all the dawns,  
That the heart craves for? Come, Queen Sympathy,  
Eternal goddess unto brother men,  
Scantly though thou be taken to our hearts!

The foot is heavy and the weak knees fail,  
All things ring out a hollow loneliness,  
And but a songless plain are hills and dales,  
Until the fullness of the breath divine  
Breathes forth the cycle of thy endless years.

*May, 1867.*

A DREAR DAY.

---

O IT is dull to be without friends;—  
Ever to sit and brood  
O'er solitary ends,  
While the spent spirit droops into stagnant mood.

O it is hard when each eager wave,—  
In a surge from a spirit confined,—  
That would leap from its cave,  
Is broken and beaten back by a bitter wind.

'Tis weary to wait and see hope as, on high,  
She doth whiten and wane far away;  
And there cometh a sigh,  
As she flies and returns not however we pray.

Dream-songs lose the ring of their chime,  
For mists that are cold overhang,  
And they thwart the pastime,  
And the voice that was eager, too eager, and sang.

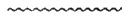
Ah, the whisper, that wound from the throat,  
    Drippeth no more its honey-gold  
In a spray-melilote,  
    But the blossoms are withered and wan and cold.

And a tear dims the eye, and the cloud  
    Clings about with a brooding dark ;  
And the smiles are black-browed,  
    And the voice that was lovely we cannot hark.

O 'tis easy to picture bright end  
    When the way is all golden-fair,  
While sunbeams and singing blend,  
    Twy-lipped, and deliciously kissing the air.

But the footstep is weak, and faltereth,  
    And the dream in the soul grows cold,  
And a winter hints death,  
    As it blows o'er the path through the tear-grey  
    wold.

## ENTHUSIASM.



WHITHER has sped that shining angel maid,  
Who, throned upon our hearts' crest blos-  
soming,  
Once shed love-light o'er petals rosy-rayed,  
And stirred within our souls a lovely thing?

Heaven's gates ope wide upon cold wonderless eyes;  
The stars float forth and charm the empty groves,  
Unblessed the maidens of the dawn arise;  
What gain have we in losing all our loves?

Ah! wisdom is white age's heritage,  
And works the iron of his winter out,  
Where flowers blow not, nor dare spring suns to rage,  
But a cold hand sows all with stone about.

Ah me, pale wisdom is a mighty king,  
Heir worthy of unwilling reverence,  
Whose kingship sees the end of everything  
Within his realm and small magnificence.

A cold and parchèd plant is in his hall,  
    Putting forth tendrils in a tardy growth ;  
The weak wan blossom strikes against the wall ;  
    A narrow bound is heaven and sky to both.

Come all sweet loves in clusters round my head,  
    Come scarce-seen hyacinths of the forest dells,  
Come singing softly how ye filled and fed  
    From out free skies your wealth of dripping bells.

Calm me ye teachings of the world-old hills,  
    Whose ways lead up to where my maiden stands,  
Pointing down vistas that great hope fulfils—  
    The brightest stardrop made of God's fair hands.

She is the happiest maiden in the world,  
    Though beaten down a thousand times a day  
By winds and storm that round her feet are curled,  
    By weight of mist that spheres the rose with gray.

As earth-born monster, sorely maimed and spent,  
    Cleaves close unto the nursing-mother's breast,  
And, nostril-fed by breaths thus nurture-blent,  
    Gains greater strength the more he is opprest.



So she, when—flying far on heavenly ways—  
The weak wings falter and the breaths wax faint,  
Kneels low beneath the feet of God and prays  
For meed of answering love unto her plaint.

And then the lilies on her suppliant brows  
Uplift their heads to look upon the light,  
That kindles on her eyes as sacred vows  
Are breathe upwards to the radiant height.

The crippling bonds of earth's despair grow weak,  
Beneath the sun that answers but to bless ;  
A fervent heaven glows upon her cheek,  
And she is stayed above all weariness.

For she is perfect-souled in every way,  
Even through patience and the woe that waits,  
Till clouds shall lift their darkness from the day,  
For she lives ever by the morning gates.

She scorneth fame and gains man's unbelief,  
And screaming daws strive her fair flight to mar,  
And soil and bruise her like a trampled leaf,  
Until she flies to God's beyond, afar :

Whence looks she down with tender angel-smile  
    Upon the striving atoms of the sphere,  
And sees long ways grow shorter, mile by mile,  
    And all the toilers nearer year by year.

Ah, God gives pity full of love, and hope  
    Full as the starlit heavens ; gives to bear  
Till mute for joy she sees the future ope,—  
    Her heart-chords singing o'er a slain despair.

*Jan*, 1868.

## HOW LONG?

**H**OW long shall a fount silver-voiced, silver-  
hued,—

From its spring welling nude,—

Set flowing, flowing

Into the sour dark throat of a stagnant pool,

Be white and cool,

And pure of song?

How long, ah, how long?

How long shall a bud, in its morn of sweet scent,

From kin element

Ta'en lonely, lonely,

Into a cold and cheerless garret-room

Of sunless gloom,

Live sweet, live strong?

How long, ah, how long?

How long shall the frost of the winter enchain  
    All the life, all the gain—  
    In bondage, bondage—  
Of the spring that would utter a flower-joy sweet,  
    Waiting in hope to greet  
    Zephyrs in balmy throng?  
How long, ah, how long?

How long shall the snow, brushed away from the wings  
    Of the dawn as she sings,—  
    Coy maiden, maiden,—  
From behind her white veil the cold sur. to entreat,  
    Under trampling feet,  
    To heaven belong?  
How long, ah, how long?

How long shall hedge-dews just awake, agate-eyed,  
    In their crystal abide—  
    E'en though hidden, hidden—  
When winds of unrest to run riot are fain,  
    And blow, from the lane,  
    Dust the bright drops among?  
How long, ah, how long?

How long shall a harp-string, grown sick of the  
strain,

Struck again, struck again,

To nigh parting, parting,

Give forth the sweet note it was wont to make?

Till its heart do break

As the note shrieks wrong?

How long, ah, how long?

How long shall the light of the love-dawning eyes,

As the day's mists arise,

O'erclouding, clouding,—

Each with a film enweaving a closer band,—

Be bright to gainstand,

The clouds among?

How long, ah, how long?

How long shall the life, grasping close a frail rope,

Overweighed to wanhope,

And fainting, fainting,

Deepen ever the fount upspringing within the heart;

Find yet, in untouched part,

Love hidden with a song?

How long, ah, how long?

*May, 1868.*

SONNET.

“**T**O be half-hearted thus, with banner furled,  
    Beneath the shallow irony of him  
    Who knows thee not : to see, with eyelight dim,  
Thy soul's ideals, as scorched leaves, upcurled,  
Unowned and lost within the weightier world :  
    To cry off thy believing in the hymn  
    Throbb'd through humanity : to mock, as whim,  
That highest tremble where thine heart was  
    whirled ;—  
Be this called manliness ?—to walk with those  
    Who, kin to some threadbare true gentleman,  
    When he is by, shirk all high friends they can.”  
Pity me, dear old poor ones, ye I chose ;  
And plant your deeper souls around me close ;  
    Uphold lest weakly unbelief unman !

*October, 1867.*

SONG. THE MAID'S FOREBODING.

---

AS came I o'er the ridge  
Toward the river-bridge,  
To climb long pathways of bright hills,  
I found the water flowing,  
And the joined sunlights glowing,  
Where the snapped logs had laid their hand of chills.

A storm had wrought mad part,  
Till the great river-heart,  
Smitten unto its furthest rills,  
Had torn itself from languor,  
And, with a rushing anger,  
Swollen the foamings of its furious wills.

Now calm again, and clear,  
As a mount-guarded mere,  
It had forgot the rage that kills,

And bore the bridge's losses,  
Somewhere to rest on mosses,  
In the thick sedgeweed that the low bank frills.

With pink uncovered feet,  
I strove the stream to meet,  
Buoyed on green rocks, whose dark deep stills  
Were flashed with darting silver,  
As minnow or lithe elver  
Calmed on the cool moist stone its quivering gills.

But on the rocks I slid,  
Glossed with their coverlid  
Of viscid growth that every foothold fills.  
It was a dream, but never  
Crossed I the bridgeless river,  
Or gat me to the pathway of the hills.

*March 12th, 1868.*



## A GREEK LOVE-SONG.

(FROM SAPPHO.)

---

**E** NVIED peer he were of the gods, meseemeth,  
Whoso sitting over against thee, arm-clasped,  
Drinks thy low sweet answering voice, and light laugh's  
Languorous heavings.

Struck through heart of mine is a barb that rouseth  
Throbs therein of billowy burning tumult ;  
Dare I toward thee venture a glance, my lovewords  
Falter half-uttered :

And the voice is broken in me, while over  
All the fair soft skin is a thrill sent flaming ;  
Dimness clouds the eyes, and the hearing is of  
Intricate buzzings.

Streams of chilly dew are upon me, tremors  
Seize me turned to paler than wan green grass hues ;  
Little short hath death of his gripe upon me  
Emptied of breathing.

## A ROMAN LOVE-SONG.

(FROM THE ANTHOLOGY.)

---

**L**YDIA, lovely in maiden sorceries,  
Gleaming more whitely than milk or lily-buds,  
Blush-red o'er snowy hues like double rose-blossoms,  
Fairer than finest of Indian ivory.  
Loosen, O sweetheart, shed out thy tender hair  
Amber and shining in sunniest golden hues.  
Cover not, maiden, thy neck that is silvery,  
Rising from bright and shapeliest shoulder-curves.  
Flash on me, darling, the sheen of thy starry eyes  
Curtained above by a dusk of black eyelashes.  
Turn to me, sweet one, cheeks warm and roseate,  
Hued as from baths of the Tyrian purple-dye.  
Pouting thy lips, twin buds of pink coralline,  
Give to me, dove-like, kisses the tenderest.  
Drink'st thou the half of my heart that is passionèd!  
Striking me to the soul these of thy kisses are.  
Why dost thou take of me wine of the heart's  
bleeding?

Cover the rosebuds that are by twin apple-fruits,  
Pressed into beads of the dew of their flowering.  
Over thy bosom cinnamon lingereth ;  
Everywhere float from thee scents of delightfulness.  
O bind the blossoms that are as heart-wounds to me,  
Gleam they so bright on the ease of the snowy  
    breast.  
Cruel to see not how I am enlanguorèd !—  
Thus to abandon me now half-a-dying, love !

## A WOOING BY THE SEA.

---

FRESH from embracing waves came she,  
    A down the rocks the sunny way ;  
Her hair danced sea-pearls close to me,  
Her quickened feet made melody.

Her locks were warmer than the day  
That gilt the mosses brown and dun ;  
    The dew was sad upon each spray,  
    Seeing those tresses pass away.

How wildly my smit veins did run,  
    Voiding the sea-cool to seaward :—  
A stone, whose shock had storm begun,  
Slipped sudden, by my foot undone,—

She flashed one startled swift regard  
From eyes that were of gentle mind ;  
    My feet stood on a rocked sea-sward,  
    The morn new morns did interlard.

A mist grew till mine eyes were blind,  
Nor saw I what the fates had planned,  
In calling forth an arm of wind,  
That caught all storm-clouds it could find.

The path was far from sheltered land,  
The sea rose eager to the gale ;  
I clasped her by her trembling hand,  
She had no courage to withstand.

The foam filled hollows of the trail,  
The heavens angered all sea-calms,  
The wan sad sun began to quail  
Before the eddying storm of hail.

I took the maiden in my arms,  
I bore her through the foamy flows,  
I kissed her out of all alarms ;  
Her lips they could not hide their charms.

The cold blue kissed I into rose,  
A sweet red bud amid the spray ;  
Though storm had never ceased its blows,  
It could not touch that hidden rose.

And when relenting clouds shewed day,  
And by her home glad-safe were we,  
She let my lips on hers delay,  
Wooded and made mine that stormy way.

*Guernsey, Oct. 8th, 1868.*

## A D E L A I D A .

O CLASSIC face and speechful northern eyes,  
What power have ye to raise and bridle storm !  
With blooms, more tender than on fruit arise,  
Sunned from beneath drooped eyelids dewy-warm.

O woman-sweet the voice that ye express,  
With infinite sighings from your starry deeps,  
That make a sea's flow full of gentleness,  
Brimmed to a tear that like a moonray sleeps.

Beside thy lips my soul would die away,  
And nought be open save the outward sense,  
But those twin orbs awake so bright a day,  
They trine me to their flashing influence.

Woe that long tress that binds me helplessly,  
Made voiceless save to murmur songs of it,  
Till, like sun-glances between mist and sea,  
Thine eyes bring dawn and floods of heaven admit.

The sun doth hold us in but one embrace,  
And his bright hands, that touch thee rosily,  
Twine me so closely with thy sleep-flower face,  
That I am drowsed between the light and thee.

O sweet, what word hath made thy glances fall,  
And strike a gleam adown the mote-filled air ;  
I faint for love till they arise and call  
Me forth to life and visions golden-fair.

Shine once upon me with such flush of light,  
That, like cool streams, it buoy me to a shore,  
Where in the sedge are blossoms fresh and white,  
A spring-tide influence all whose petals pour.

Lull me to sleep lest joy be overkeen,  
Give me to wake lest all my soul I lose ;  
Grant me for ever from thine eyes to glean  
All the glamour that eyes of heaven infuse.



A D R U G B Æ A M.

---

O THAT I were the frondage of thine elms,  
To take another blossoming of spring  
With thee : leaving the summer that hath come,  
Not, as the springtide hoped, in constant glow,  
Whose rays should greet its freshness with a smile,  
But stormy as it were, in gusts that rage,  
Scattering the buds of hope.

O long world-days,  
O long world-weary days, become a dream,  
And be your arms, that grasp and crush me down,  
Mere phantoms of the night that flee the dawn.

O school-days, peeping rose behind the clouds  
Of years that are between us, bright-hued yet,  
And separate enshrined in memory,  
Ye would not slip for ever from my arms  
Whose sinews gathered strength in your embrace!  
Will ye not come again, and shadow me,  
Beneath your noble teachings, till I grow

Riper for effort, abler to withstand  
The spear-thrusts on the mail that hides the heart ?  
    Entangled in a mist that floats between  
The soul and heaven, I stretch weak palms afar  
Unto a wave-girt dimly visioned shore,  
Whence breathes the sea-wind sadly, all whose airs  
Seem laden with the burthen of my loss,  
In that I know not avenue, by sea or land,  
Whereby to gain the blossom of your hopes ;  
But, as a rainbow that the hands would reach,  
The bright desires shift farther as one strives ;  
And leave unwonted hours of weariness.

O that the brotherhoods of after-days  
Were closely knit as those that are in thee,  
Not broken to a maze of crooked rocks,  
Whereto must streams slip edgewise, and whereon  
Struggles a selfish weed to kill the flowers :  
Cold rocks whose beauty, if it be at all,  
Is beauty to itself and lendeth not.

Let my tired spirit, soothèd, wander down  
Thy golden frescades of young blossomings,  
That drink fresh streams and grow thereby  
To their own health and others', radiantly.

So may the dews, that daily rise and fall  
About the plant whose spring-source was in thee,  
Lose not the freshness of thy morning hour,

That they may take the dawn with eyes undimmed,  
And bless the Sun ere he exhaleth them.

Beloved school-days, ye are beyond the wave,  
Nor come to hide me in your kindly arms,  
But, in stray gleams of light within the glooms,  
Mock me with dreams of things that might have  
been.

Give but to tossings of wan winter thoughts  
Path to new spring, that, though it be not thine,  
May yet be kirtled with a brightening rose,  
And ever balmy with the fragrant sprays,  
Thy memories, the love of those in thee.

S U N - D R E A M S .

---

WITH the Sun upon my face,  
I can fashion, I can trace,  
In its haloed gush of light,  
In its mist that fills the sight,  
The curvèd lines, the shadowy grace  
Of her sweet face, my love's rare face.

May the Sun shine evermore,  
May no veil of cloud come o'er,  
Dimming my enchained eyes  
To whatever inward lies,  
In lovelit climes whose roseate door  
Opes to sheen seas without a shore.

Eyelids sunny-steeped convey  
To my soul your joyous ray!  
May-be the gods shall vision thence  
Promise of her sweet presence,  
To bind faint futures of to-day  
Into bright wreaths of welcome May.

E X   A N T R O .

---

**B**ENEATH a mountain summer-burned to  
brown,  
And chasmed by a torrent-bed wherein  
Fierce winters vent their wrath, a forest broods,  
Darksome and old ;—baffling the eager sun  
To touch one hidden there, upon whose ears  
The roar of neighbour waters, as they fling  
Scorn on the languor or of frosts or drouth,  
Falls like a song from far-off dreamy seas,—  
So deep is the solemnity of shade.

Thither I journeyed o'er a sad strange land,  
And, irked by thoughts, I sought and found a man,  
The spirit of a man whom myriads hate,  
Taking for certain that he loveth none.

Striving to pierce this mystery of ourselves,  
I went to commune, and to ask of him

The clue to this,—why doth the jealous wave  
Fret at the foot of every blue-crowned hill  
That overtops its foam? Is there no rest  
From the monotonies of little cries?  
Beyond what seas shall there be found escape?

The sky was clouded to a steel-grey hue,  
All save the lurid west, whose flames declared  
The last hour of the sun.

Here as we stood,  
In that first crimson of the silent day,  
I bent my head and whispered question thus—  
“What hast thou done that all is rough to thee,  
While others sail a summer sea of calm?  
Hast thou not tackling, as our brethren have,  
To guide thy shallop harbourward, and leave  
Beatings of surge and cruel wrath of wind,  
For sheltering refuge and a safe repose?  
The wind, that drave dark banks of drifting cloud  
O'er blue of thy fair heavens, was it fate?  
Is there no joyous work within the world;  
Is there no refuge from the fret of it?  
Hast thou no place, and is there nought in life  
Save isolation and a dark despair?”

I met the gaze of earnest eyes, that held

Patience with restlessness, both fire and dew :  
A weary face he raised in answering,—  
“ I know not fates that might have fallen me,  
If with brain closed to thoughts that drave me wild,  
And soul entwined with the entangling world,  
I had veiled eyes from aught that spoke of fear.  
Now is too late ; my spirit is the heir  
Of solitude's strange crowd of whisperings ;  
And eve by eve and every morn say—wait, .  
Until this perfect wasting be fulfilled.  
Should I gain or give aught, so I should bend  
My back to bind to rocks in crowded ways,  
Where fly the burning lashes of men's scorn ?  
So to its own sad self the soul reverts,  
But hath no strength alone. Apart from life,  
Life unblessed rends itself. Thus inward turns  
My wilderness of heart, bereft of joy,  
Save for the breath-fire of the floating air,  
And azure-melting rays, whose shadows tell  
The ether of God's pity overdews  
My fever-burnings. Should no sun be fierce,  
So were there never dew to bless the flower.  
To alien paths should I subdue my soul,  
And seek a track amid the busy ways,  
How would men jeer with sign and mocking word—  
' Here goes another madder than the rest.'

All corners polished to a constant rule,  
They know not aught beyond the timid line,  
And narrow circling that constraineth them.  
'Tis not the day for me ; I am born wrong,  
Being sore galled in their cold straitened ways.  
Bear with me but a moment, ere I tell,  
What made life hard upon these desolate paths,  
And scooped the sweetness that was given to youth.  
So seldom speak I, save to speechless airs,  
My thoughts run on when anyone is by.  
Once in a while, a while of many a year,  
I raise the curtain of my solitude,  
And, all unknown, and wandering outcast-like,  
Watch the great stage,—inner and outer life ;  
Its gilt and gold. One day I essayed speech  
To one chance-met : for very pity he said—  
' Grant me your pardon for a friendly word ;  
Custom will wink at this but not at that ;  
Leave to the crazed the sting of restless thought,  
Be like with us, we are respectable,  
Happy in comforts of the rightful path,  
Not overweighed with such as they distress :  
Suffer no stormy surge to mar thy course,—  
Our golden rule to do as others do.'

O coward men of slackened lukewarm blood,  
Whose inmost shrine is to a meaner god



Than ever worshipped the barbarian eld !  
Smiling, and waving with a jewelled hand,  
She calls the levee, and the crowd flocks in.  
The most misfashioned of all worshipped ones,  
She holds strait rule, and fools bow down to her,  
False patron of the slave. Her tongue is gold,  
And all her body like a coiling snake's,  
And in embraces of her velvet scales  
Hide fascinated moth-like men, that lose  
All glory of life, and fibre of great deeds ;  
Making their pride and boast to be her slaves.  
Ere we thus follow like a flock of sheep,  
With vigour nipped within a smooth routine ;  
Ere that we sway with this ignoble crowd,  
Choking all utterance of our honest thoughts  
In very gags, e'en till the poms of death,  
Let us die children and be ne'er called men,  
But have our graves beneath the open sky.  
O timid modern brood ! O bound in bars  
Of false-named brotherhood, where cowards cling  
To cowards, for a shelter to their pride,  
And care no whit for noble sympathies !  
O wasted men, O hollow hearts and cold,  
These sickly phantoms, shrouding rosy limbs,  
Crush freedom in her youth and stunt your lives ;  
Laying strait bonds o'er nature's bosom broad,

Making her base and scorning her large ways,  
And o'er her fair great sweetness drawing films,—  
Expediencies for right, for the heart's will,  
An ordered clinging unto lower laws :  
Laws that would fill with slime of smooth pretence  
The void where heart was ; with cold courtesy  
Requite the starveling that has asked for love.  
Ye that have soul at all, for ye must scorn  
This puppet-show and little dance of life,  
O rend your tinsel uniforms away,  
And though false brethren mock ye, cleave your  
    ways,  
And, clad in nature's colours, come ye forth,  
With hearts unclouded and a godlike brow.  
Is it a thing to make one laugh or weep ?  
Each hates the bonds, but no one dares be first  
To fling them far, till, pitiable and mean,  
He grows accustomed to the fetter touch,  
Cringes for place, calls virtue quixotry,  
And makes life hollow ere he comes to die.  
To mount a ladder that nowhither leads,  
Some glory must throw glitters on the rungs ;  
'Tis the bent heads of baser slaves below :  
Be this reward, who envies all the toil ?  
Be this life's worthiest who would have life ?  
The years creep on, and years gone by deride

This double age, so great in cultured brain,  
So mean in all the manliness of eld.  
When again shall man be fearless, cease to bow  
To an oldwife, with such a name as makes  
The Greek gods laugh, while Aphrodite's lip  
Mocks at the slaves that crowd at Grundy's knees!  
Have joy, ye wretched ones, and hug harsh bonds,  
All gauded o'er with images of might,  
That fool the weak sheep into following.  
Ye are to-day ill-coloured falling leaves,  
And chivalry is dead that made the spring,  
Erstwhile so glorious, that is faded now.  
Ye vulgar dames, and low-idealld maids,  
That crowd the markets for the marriage-bid,  
And know not love, but wreathe in languid arms  
Unknightly men and idle-handed slaves;  
Room for a heart! ye have but prison-space,  
And now one, poisoned, sickens at the core,  
And now another, wearied out, escapes,  
And in some distant wooded rivery land  
Finds hiding, and in careless work-day garb,  
Free nature in his eyes and heart and mouth,  
Mocks merrily old crabbed proprieties.  
'Gainst these there shall be rebels more and more  
Till each man gain a conscience of his own.  
Ah, would ye tempt me to be sane with ye?

Nobler the madness of a soul o'erwrought,  
Sweeter the straining, weary, toward the heights,  
Intent for gleam through clouds of weariest gray ;  
Fairer to beat weak wings, and feed on dreams,  
One day to pierce the dimness of the skies ;  
Richer, though dying as a spark, one glance  
Of the light flaming from the heart divine,  
To scatter into shards the drossy earth—  
Though body fail and brain refuse belief—  
Than years made large and filled with your content.

Thus would my madness give them answering  
Who, from high places of Circæan sloth,  
Frown the disturbing folly of those few  
That dare to walk the world as being free :  
Madness I know, disease without a cure,  
Save ampler knowledge and a larger love.

Albeit oft this loneliness smites sore,  
But a sole fleck on spreading skies my pain ;  
For I am free, as buds on untrod moors.  
But many men I know, who hide deep wounds,  
And are made gaolers o'er their prisoned thoughts,  
For fear the cruel world should scorn the truth,  
And crush them down amid their children's tears,—  
Taking the bread of these unequal days.  
Aye many brave I know, who can endure  
Their lives read cruelly wrong, without a cry ;

Read as betokening foolish purposes,  
And nought of grander aim than on a crowd  
To flash eccentric, and to be deemed great,  
From such misknowledge. Ah, the blind know not  
How the vast orbit of the bruised deep heart  
Runs circling true, and in a plane that spreads,  
Out from the weakly vision, past the stars.

The dreams that men call mad, are mad, as far  
As to the flesh that covers a man pertains,  
Which groweth sleekest, free from aught of care,  
To pierce the mists that shroud the nobler spheres;  
Whereto the path leads brokenly, and hard  
For one to follow to the day, alone.  
But these same thoughtless ones, that laugh and die,  
Shall yet be stirred, for crowded over-close  
To adore the golden god, he hides his face,  
And bids their Baals save them if they can.  
Pride shall be bowed ere equal paths they find,  
Where hand joins hand and makes a joyous world.

The soul thoughts cannot hurt, so they be born  
Of charity that crushes all deceit;  
For there is given a small store of great love  
To tinge the voidness of the narrow world,  
Where ignorance takes flights on busy wings,  
And pride builds roofs and will not hear of skies.

But to the tale. So long gone by and dim

Is that strange time, that the particular edge,  
That cut me then, is dull and blunted now ;  
But somewhat as I tell the wound grew wide.  
Cross barren tracts and fare long populous ways :  
Within a distant town, just such for size  
That any evil tale, that one may fling  
On idle pools, will splash a circle round,  
And touch all border-lands, nor yet so large,  
That scandal-mongers cannot know their ground ;  
In such a town I passed my boyish days.  
Swift-ebbing youthtide came, and shewed me life  
Half-puzzle and half-prison. Thus I grew  
Half-joyed, half-wearily. I had one friend :  
Ill taught was he of two opposing creeds,  
Nor yet with knowledge opening out his soul  
To see the light of God in spite of them :  
Now I saw hand of love in all the worlds,  
But this I deemed ;—if one be blind to stars  
That fill the heavens with a domed delight,  
It is a piteous thing ; and surely foul  
To curdle all the wandering love of such  
By bitter drouth of unrelaxing lips,  
And hard averted eyes where sympathy  
Lights ne'er a flame of bountiful bright hues ;  
So I walked with him. Then those round outspake,  
And loudly called me infidel, which means,

As I must take it, one that hath no trust.  
A blind-eyed wrong, for were it not for faith,  
What is this world to me? and further this;—  
I feel God leaves not him who knows him not,  
Not e'en to him doth veil his face always,  
But pities most the weariest wanderers.  
But these scanned not the heart, but busied them  
In easy decencies and fair pretence.  
For lack of inward, outward signs they loved;  
And he that drave his twain full overweighed  
Him with a single steed. Thus up and down  
Vibrated e'er their gilded balances.  
Now I was poor and young, and he, my friend,  
Poor too; we had no power and so fared ill.  
'Twas worse than sin made known or published  
cheats,  
To fail and shudder with miscarrying mind,  
Before the Unseen, who was so plain to these,  
'Twas strange they should have served him yet so ill.  
They made a winter of their hearts to me,  
So I took fire in countervail, and flamed  
'Have I not right to follow my own ways,  
Likewise as ye in yours? Why should I serve  
Ye whom I know not—ye who misknow me?'  
They all looked colder on me every day.  
I was a boy with nerves like tightened strings :

There were so many bruised and beaten men,—  
I would not break, and so I left their cries,  
And in a distant village gained my bread,  
By arduous lordship of my strong young hands.  
Being, of make, an easy soul to bruise,  
I had hard letters from them oftentimes :  
At length one came, that I was ostracised  
By my own deeds, from ever seeing heaven,  
Save that with tears I should straightway return,  
And bend myself with their humilities,  
To pray the mercy of their vengeful God.  
Then all my soul shot forth its wrath : I wrote  
'Curse as you will, curse on : there is one God  
Who is the crown and flower and root of Right ;  
Let me have him in any other's hell.'  
They washed their pious hands. I braved it out,  
Thus far, but hardly, being stricken ill.  
Then that poor godless man got scent of it,  
And in the teeth of aught of loss or hurt,  
Came straight to tend me. O those unknown days  
Ere from the gorged fire-clutch my life returned,—  
When he was by me and I saw him not.  
As I grew strong he weakened ; then to him  
I made ill payment for the tenderness  
And love divine that he had poured on me :  
Whilst in his care I strengthened, in my arms



He waned and died. Ah what a hideous time,  
When all things lay in dusky coils of woe,  
Whence no light sparked, but all the skies were cloud.  
One sole gleam strove toward dawn. He had so  
longed

To know of God, untaught that that desire  
Proved its fulfilment; but to his tired mind  
The world seemed barren. Not a scoffer he,  
Judging large light through his own narrow chink,  
And calling shade a flaw; but he was lost  
In the strait meshes of demonstrables,—  
Caught in the lines of those who proudly seek  
To measure, soul by body, life by death;  
With geometric hand to fathom heaven,  
And, failing in this, cry out There is no God.  
Such ones are bred in loveless times like these,—  
Protruded intellects with brains for hearts,  
And arguments for food, their darkening souls  
Smothered in webs of words, to whom the far  
Dim depths of mystery and half-caught hope  
Are made as nought; for is not logic king?  
Seeing life as bounded by this troublous span,  
He wandered sadly on the darksome path  
Of nature's cruelties, and bitter fate;  
With sick eyes seeing not that plans divine  
Being perfect are inexorably bound.

He toiled at steps that, to be known, have need  
 Of the great radiance that makes fair the heights.  
 All things for choice the mighty mother holds,  
 Being girt about with colours,—pleasure, pain,  
 Knowledge through strife, and ease of stagnant  
       ways ;

Darkness and light, things evil and things good,  
 Higher and lower, foul and beautiful,  
 Flowers marred by us, and buds that yet are fair ;  
 And, ere she loose the folds of ignorance,  
 Wisdom hath need of teaching to a sphere,  
 Globed of the full fruit of experience.  
 Ah, what they call the cruelty of the world,  
 It eats of many souls and crushes them.  
 We, little germs within the Father's hand,  
 What would we choose?—a stagnance or a void,  
 Or a sweet cloying pleasure, wherein man  
 Slips into easy childhood. Seek we rest ;—  
 Doth paradise make men, or aught save babes  
 Without full hearts of knowledge or control ?  
 Truth must be found, not given, to make growth ;  
 Firmer for every blow the toiling arm.

Ah, how he yearned to see light's harmony  
 Bind up the thorns that singly rended him ;  
 And make a crown of love to all the pains.  
 E'en ere he died the golden dawn he saw :

I learned this slowly as he tended me.  
The kindly human-nature working out,  
And scattering far the toils the years had wove,  
Sought its great centre, and a clue was found  
From all experience showing one accord;  
And some strange aid given unto him who strives,  
So soon he 'scape the cramp of bigots' ways.

This was the only shining star mine eyes  
Found for their food the bitter time he died :  
On this I fed, and kept a spray of life,  
Plucked from the tree that death had nigh made dry.  
Hither I wandered, and through all these years,  
I wait and think and dream, with weight and woe  
Of those hard years to drag at me ; with nerves  
Shaken and powerless like an ancient man's.  
Those days mix with and trouble these ; though firm  
At the soul's root I waver into doubt.  
'Tis but a bruised blossom ; what of that ?  
These years are few, and ages are unborn :  
Spring cometh more than once, and sunlight heals.  
God is not shamed of any weakly child,  
And giveth worlds for food to make him strong.  
What growth transcendeth this ? The evil ones  
Doth he not know them that they strive with clay ;  
Shall he not purge them in his flow of fire  
And shew the heavens to the burdened earth ?

And the great rebels, ah, how they shall love,  
 When perfect freedom knows the perfect law ;  
 And myriad-spirit that was breathe out  
 To all the crannies of the universe,  
 Lifts to the mother-life its talents gained !

The soul that battled with a cloud, shall it  
 Be weaker in the light of skies grown plain ?  
 Doubts cling unto the weary limbs, and tire  
 Like garments drenched with storms. When I am  
 weak,

In some such wise as this the phantoms come.—  
 Is it from brain,—the soul's abiding-place,  
 The plain expression of the mystic spark,  
 The bird's cage-bars—there come disease and pain ;  
 Or shall I go, a bruised and shattered thing,  
 O'erworn with toilsome warring, birth to death,  
 Into the infinite of mightier days ?  
 Why will I not believe ?—I know ; the soul  
 Shall wash in love its stains of weariness,  
 With meed of gathering life to rend the toils,  
 And a new fire wherewith to fling afar  
 The serpents crushed, and all the bruise of fight.  
 Then comes the phantom back :—is life then all  
 That I bear on, thus cleansed ? Weakness and  
 strength  
 Make up myself : no man is wholly pure.

If life be thus, shall it not flow again  
Into the twilights of the infinite sea,  
To be reformed anew? Do we then fade,  
And lose identity, as wan cold floods  
Of death flow over our last agonies,  
With white waves gathering, as the weaker grows  
The cling of life, till all things wash away,  
Save what? What is the symbol left to us?  
With slipping faiths why tossed and torn am I?—  
Experience shall not lose its consciousness,  
And good toil-gained is not made frivolous:  
The memory of God shall conquer death.  
Then this thought comes. Should one advance not foot,  
Nor his soul grow; shall he then retrograde,  
Through downward wastes and every lower life,  
Till into germ he fade and flow again?  
A grain of sterile seed that dies unknown,  
Type of a mighty waste throughout the worlds,  
Doth it not make one tremble for his soul?  
Then trust returns. The soul that slips and falls,  
From ledge to ledge adown the steep of time,  
Shall wake one day, and, with a bitter pang,  
See sloughs of degradation all around.  
Then like recoiling of a wave beat back,  
Shall it burst bondage, and find issue forth  
With cumulative strength, until its tide

Gain, surge by surge, the height from which it fell!  
These depths are dim, and hope is but a star;  
But God's hand reaches o'er the heights and depths,  
And those redeemed ones, shall they not the more  
To teach the lost be meet, and love the more  
For all the depths they fell? Ah, it is vain,  
To drop a plumb into the endless heavens:  
Yet will the dreams arise, and as with chains  
Drag burning feet o'er broken ground of thought.

Child-life of joy will spread out soothing hands  
O'er pain of aftertime and fight despair;  
But mine was bitter, and the balm breathes slow.  
A man, once outcast, is so weary-souled,  
The ball of thought, set rolling, ceaseth not,  
Though the thread flow through busy crowds, or where  
Strive alien cares to gain the mastery,  
And one grow wan by always following.  
Ah friends, ye deem that I should take your ease  
Unto my barren bosom healthfully;  
Ye are so happy in your golden paths,  
While I am bruised by all dispiteous things.  
O idle would-bes and O barren deeds,  
Your trifling joys make not my dreams to stay,  
But they roam far, and seek the mystic haunt  
Of some huge Titan, unhealed of his wound,  
'Neath a cragged rock, who keeps his heart from death.

Is he not nobler thus for all his pain ?  
Joy all ye can, ye idle ones, who sleep  
With nerveless arm, that shrinks from conquering toil ;  
For ye are lapped in thoughtlessness so smooth  
One moment of my bliss is years of yours.  
And yet ye slew me with your icy hearts,  
And these faint chords but ring what might have been.  
Ye prate of progress, and ye praise yourselves :  
Go back to elder days, seek those whose hearts,  
Tear-fed in life, have crumbled into dust.  
Go spatter their dead brows with praise ; ye see  
The errant and strange marsh-lights of their time,  
The mystics and the mad, that such as ye  
Crushed with loud mockeries, till the noble fire,  
Bearing a fragile clue of silver thread,  
Athwart unopened glooms and devious ways,  
Flamed faintly unto death. And then ye came,  
And claimed the sheen of those poor madmen's lights.  
Each had poured forth his burning heart in pain ;—  
' Mere moonray crazy beams ' ye wise ones said,  
And turned away to your well-trodden paths :  
So runs the world. One day ye come with oil,  
To float the lamp as something newly born ;  
Taking the glimmer for your own reflex.  
They blame ye not, their home was elsewhere,  
Whose misty portal flashed its light too soon.

Ah glorious paupers, that eat not the bread  
Of the sleek world! O ye redeeming souls,  
What have ye proved with your strange-flashing lights?  
Do they not point beyond our grosser lives?

Seems to thee, friend, these thoughts are rough and  
rude:

They cling and brood upon this hermit life  
Days after days, as o'er a dim-lit land  
Burdened with weary dreams. In solitude  
The soul by trivial cares is undistraught,  
Takes to itself the wild and weird of things,  
That strike, as steel from stone, faint sparks, and flee.  
In lands of mystery the life finds joy,  
With wandering journeys into distant spheres,  
Whence lights and darks come either more intense.  
The further strayeth it to seek the rays,  
That glimmer far beyond it like the stars,  
So is it weaker, being lost afield,  
Far from its home and mortal resting-place.  
O wonderful the mystery of the soul!—  
Made great enough to grasp eternity,  
A weakling fainting on its earliest verge.  
By how much doth the wing strain out for flight,  
By so much crowd the misty forms of fear;  
And it is lost in wandering unknown ways,  
Far into vaguest space and twilit voids.



Some yearning fingers in the quest find joy  
And touch on spheres wherein the visioned eyes  
Gather delight like flowerets, and are made  
Luminously happy as a golden sun.  
But oft 'tis led into the marsh-light lands  
Of night-mare fears, palsied imaginings,  
Dark nights that spurn a morn, starless and chill,  
Where passions flare like lightnings tempest-born,  
Wane then, and leave each chasm darker-gloomed ;  
And the tired soul finds avenues of woe  
Leading to lonely fields of vast despair.  
Life is a various burden unto all,  
A wondrous whirlpool made of mystery ;  
A casket half-unlocked, with hieroglyph  
That tells infinities of deathless things,  
But speaks strange sorrows that men ponder o'er,  
With tears, and tears, and ever streams of tears,  
From eyes averted from the higher lights.

As year by year new rosy blossomings  
Cling to the warm breast of the nursing spring,  
So bud forth infant men—as ceaselessly :  
Whereto or what be all, we know it not ;  
For life some whisper tells us, not for death ;  
For some great thronging of the diverse souls,  
For union and the growth of powers divine ;  
For building of a temple grand and large,

From infinites of our ephemera ?  
Or whether, as we crave, our nascent life  
Climbs individual on an endless hill,  
With ever nobler light before the eyes.  
We may have lives we are not conscious of,  
With dormant memories that record not yet,  
As sleep discovers not its hidden things.  
The brain then follows not the soul, whose modes  
We may discern, when fall the spent dead leaves,  
That are the body, and its mystic veil ;  
We may be all one life, and gather thus  
All love and growth into a common store—  
One grand identity, with registry  
Of myriad separate developments,  
Whose streams shall mix in their due time, and make  
One sum of ocean for eternities,  
One mighty mind that carries all the past  
In individual chambers of itself.  
How pierce so far ? But in the whirl of stars  
There is no flaw, and all the plan is true :  
No evil power lives endless harmony,  
But love is fair ; whose grains are daily sown,  
Never to die. There is some fountain-head  
Whence cometh all that beauty sphered about  
That fills the worlds. I am content with it :  
Whatever draught is offered is the best.

Faith is the flower of reason, not the root :  
 Mean things alone are hideous, of our trust  
 And of our love unworthy : He is great,  
 Too great for falseness, vast enough to trust ;  
 For if he were not infinite for trust,  
 So manifest we see him all supreme,  
 We are in evil plight. Were he some blind power,  
 Striving, and marring all his would-be work,  
 Or one that battles with a rival king,  
 What shall we do with meed of helpless life ?  
 But all the deeper that our still souls quest  
 With pure eyes turning upwards, so there fall  
 More streams of answering light, and lovely love,  
 And so the more we see him for all needs  
 Able, and far beyond abounding, where  
 Stretch shadowy lines 'neath veils to mysteries,—  
 Lands unexplored, unknown, where our feet fail,  
 And our faint souls are overweak to roam.  
 What can we do but work and hope and grow,  
 Rising from doubting prayer to perfect trust ?  
 And they, that love me not, would have me yield,  
 For that I speak not with such lips as theirs,  
 Or go their ways. O freedom with bruised wings,  
 Shall I return, be bound in narrow rules,  
 Repent ?—whose morn opes all the heart in thanks,  
 Whose daytime-waiting is a silent prayer,

Whose evetide falls like close of low-sung chaunts.  
Unto their sackcloth shall I yield my limbs,  
And crush my soul down to their rightful path,  
Debarred from unauthoritative flight?  
Who giveth counsel thus? The day draws nigh,  
When men shall leave the phantom of a god,  
Whose glory lives or dies within their hands;  
Hanging on praise of their inglorious lips;  
A weakly god whose purpose hath been marred,  
And clenched anew to meet an alien power;  
An angry god heart-ashes may appease,  
A jealous god whose honour needeth man,  
To trumpet praises with his puny voice;  
A god who, from a narrow golden throne,  
Smiles on a certain few respectables,  
With boon of safety from a deathless wrath  
That he is author of, so they will hold  
In memory some formulæ of faith,  
Crying out sentiments that have lost life,  
And mysteries whose inner heart is changed,  
From a wide primal love, to selfishness  
Where each seeks safety, and forgetteth love.  
Whoso would reverence fearlessly, is chained  
Beneath cold frowns of outraged majesty,  
Being thrust back to schemes whereon lies dust  
That blinds the eyes of those that push and strive,

Each one for his school's garbling of the light.  
In narrow hiding each one sheltereth,  
Trusting his creed before the face of God,  
The while that myriad men work unatoned,  
All in the open fields, waiting to die.  
These husks shall fall and yield to full fair fruit.  
O man, weak man, rash self-sufficient child,  
Not owning the large motherliness of love—  
Queen-mother love who sits with lucent eyes,  
Embracing sons and daughters, in a sphere  
Too broad and bright, for any lens and tube  
Of intellect to span! Full manliness  
And woman-sweetness gather of her fruit,  
And children reach it with their small fair hands.  
Time stays for us, and heaven's wisdom waits  
The mellow influence of endless years,  
To lead the scoffer to that mother's peace.  
But 'creeds' again you say. Though spirit bound  
Be spirit then no more, and strait cold lips  
Drink from them bitterness and fling out fears,  
Like hail on tender spring-leaves, yet great souls  
And beauteous souls have gathered food therein,  
Beneath the umbrage of their sheltering leaves,  
For God, howe'er distort, is at the root.  
Since he fills all things, then in divers lights,  
On many a path, shall he shine forth like dawn.

On him who fain draws nigh, yet all of these  
Centre in that one way of all ways, truth :  
Where each shall see his highest, truth is there.  
Large hearts drink sweetness and enlarge their love,  
And mean souls dwarf what is too great for them,  
But ages wait, and we are hardly born,  
The puny infants of eternal growth.  
There comes outpouring and influx of light,  
To swell man's heart, but, as the years increase,  
The husks close over till that flush grow wan.  
Then truth unvivified is no more truth,  
But men tread loveless paths made harsh with drouth,  
And deem themselves secure, as bound with charms  
Of old dry flowers that are ne'er made sweet ;  
While kindly breaths of nature blow afield,  
Away from them who crouch 'neath sinking walls.  
Ah careless ones, when time renews its springs !  
Ye build and guard so close, but hungered souls,  
Whose love turns free with unbound palms to heaven,  
Find you, within a crypt that hindereth  
The flow of light, misplacing filtered rays  
For the free sunbeam that floats down for all.  
One day shall be awakening of deaf ears,  
And it shall be as heretofore—where, where ?  
Where doth God hide himself ? 'tis blank and void  
Where we were taught to look upon his face.

Then in a frenzy shall men ask the groves,  
The guileless blossoms and the aged oak ;  
And they shall sigh in awe sublime, and he  
Shiver with strange rustlings among his boughs,  
Yet answer not ; and men shall ask the sea,  
And it shall raise white wastes of hollow waves,  
That have washed out the blood of many hearts,  
And moan a grievous moan, but give no word.  
Then ancient furrows shall be ploughed across,  
And tranquil lakes uprent in awful storm,  
And many fires and many waters join.  
King gold shall fail along the lands, and dream  
Sit barren on the brows of scheming men.  
Then shall they shiver in a newborn fear,  
And bind their pride and bow their pallid brows,  
And on the dust the weary eyes shall rest :  
A cry go up, and many turn to pray.  
Then shall they commune with their opened hearts,  
And ask for speech from out the misty heaven,  
And search and seek, and listen all intent,  
Amid the pauses of the moaning wind.  
Comes wakening answer, with a still small voice  
Blowing round each, and overshadowing all  
The tossed mad waves with cruse of peaceful oil ;  
To smooth their wrath into a calm divine,  
And change the troubled eddy's broken whirl

To gradual channels ; such a world new-born  
Hath, flowing lovingly, upon her breast.  
An angel song shall rise above the land—  
God crowneth all and thou art but the dust :  
Too vast to approach, touch thou his garment-hem  
In love and right ; thou can'st not fail him there.  
Loving the brethren he hath given thee,  
Thou art not far from loving him unseen.  
Whene'er thou feel'st a loadstar at thy soul,  
That prompts toward love, and draws thy spirit close  
To kindred of great thoughts, until it long  
For all things grand and pure and nobly done ;  
Where'er before thine eyes the gleamings rise,  
Blown sweetly round the universe of stars,  
There worship, it is God. Within the world  
There is a leaven yet. Ah hid good works,  
And fair fresh hearts, ye are not yet died out :  
An incense rises from great quiet deeds.

The curling mists, from out dark caverns born  
Of weeping woods, are weary round the sun ;  
Yet light is lord of darkness, sun of gloom :  
Smitten by dawnwinds how the night is rent !  
The blast shall come, and scatter as dry leaves  
The stated services of all the creeds,  
That make strait limits for humanity.  
No sacrifice, whose fragrance may fill skies,



Is manufactured praise of a cold heart.  
O empty soul, O lyre without a song,  
'Tis the true praise, not when thy lips do laud,  
Though they should ope at all the bidden times,  
But when thy soul is rapt beyond the world,  
And the mute adoration mounts the heaven,  
From chords too full to tell it, hearts that feel  
One atom of the majesty divine.  
Ah, noble work shall follow praise like this.  
I hear one say—'If there be none to praise  
Why should we heed or if we curse or bless?'  
Is cursing aught to turn his love away,  
His boundless love? It but delays thine own,  
To thine own hurt. But 'punishment' one saith:  
Ah ye of the God that seeks some subterfuge,  
Ere that his justice can forgive a child,  
He lifts from germ as age encircles age;  
Ye find the taste of having others damned  
Sweet on the palate, so but safe yourselves.  
The growth of music in the tuneless lyre;  
The making crooked straight, unlovely fair;  
This the hill path whereon our feet must climb:  
Is this not burden without other doom?  
All growth and birth is striving and with pain;  
The present blots the past in flowers and souls.  
But memories crowd like veils of heavy tears,

And in a blight do woeful leaves hang long,  
And many storms roar out, ere that the spring  
Rends off the winter's bitter blackened folds.  
Joys conquer pain. First make thou sure of love :  
Paths it makes plain through every pathless land,  
And streams through every drouth. What shall we do?  
The blasphemies are old, nor strange nor great,  
Easy to learn. Our puling voice's wrath  
But adds a sighing to the few sad sounds,  
That reach the mournful pity of the skies.  
He made us ; shall he then not know  
The first rude workings of our feverous hearts,  
Content to wait their yearning unto His ?  
Daring are we forsooth ? Our fiercest cry  
Is but a lamb's, that straying from the fold  
Wanders a weary quest for its lost dam.  
We are but molecules : our short earthly years,  
They do but tremble as a few spray drops  
That drip from out the hollow of God's hand.  
The all of our creation hangs on this ;  
Whate'er the channel of our birth or life,  
That hath been wrought for us without our wills,  
We have the ultimate choice,—a steep brave path  
Of upward strivings : easy idle-meads  
Of selfish sleep ; the choice of good or ill,  
Of hate or love,—whate'er be fate or doom :

Whether our plane of life be high or low.  
This individual fire detached from Him ;  
This spark of freedom is a mystery.

Since in eternity is soul always,  
Were it not best to mind the present well ;  
And if the worlds shall know a sweeter life,  
In acted right and honourable things,  
Than in sick yearnings after futures dim,  
Shall this bring harm ? Yet ever some strong souls,  
Fallen on a world's arena that seems strait,  
Will stretch out hands unto the distant deeps,  
And drink auroras of the far off days.  
Maybe without such leaven man forgets,  
And slippeth downward into sleep's content.  
It may be aspiration opes the way  
Into a nobler sphere ; but strain it not ;  
It hovers ever just above thy work.  
And what is heaven ? It gleams among the worlds,  
Being evil's hell, and happy growth of good :  
Some carry with them crescent founts of it.

Upwards, upwards shall we for ever gaze  
Into far skies that by high-scaling time,  
Are never read ;—that never shall be known,  
Until in souls large-formed, whose Titan thirst  
Drinketh deep draughts of heaven, the God-impress  
Be fadeless to eternities, and clear

Of any cloud of doubt, such as our world  
Of weary children tosses us to play ?  
Woe those dimmed faiths ! Born of the solitude  
They are my weakness and corroding care,—  
Harsh parasites upon a lonely tree.  
Such wise they come : can we have happiness  
When nothing greater than we know remains ?  
Again ; would seas rejoice if all their waves  
Were swathed and bound to infinite dead calm,  
Or no new light shed on their hollowed hearts ?  
We comprehend not of the passionless life,  
If there be soul that is all passionless,  
Nor know we life that reaches past our own,  
More than a leaf can flutter thoughts like ours.  
Having fair forms about us for our joy,  
Why call we phantoms from the dimmest heavens  
To wrestle with ? They bring no roses down.  
Love is shed o'er us here : let it be learnt  
A myriad ages told a myriad times.  
Though strange abysmal epochs ever roll  
Their spheres and cycles, infinite infinites,  
And circle all into one grand to-day,  
'Tis eye a star, but lights such vasts and deeps,  
We dare not dream, lest our hearts overflow.  
Though all eternity should watch us track  
A noble path, before is nobler dawn :

The finite measures not infinity.

With rest within her wings, the eve droops down,  
Kissed by the farewell of the sacred sun :—  
Sacred to me who see a holy hand,  
Gliding down soothèd avenues of peace,  
In every star and every starlike flower ;  
Who catch the whisper of a breath divine  
In all sad tenderness of twilight airs,  
That blow at even and morn. Shunning men's ways,  
I hate them not : they cannot but misknow.  
I have no covering for my bruised breast,  
Unfit for duties of the days that are.  
The flock would thrust at one that seems diseased.  
I am so weak while they are of the strong,  
Who dare not front the face of unknown love,  
But in some hiding-place they miscal faith,  
Elude great doubts and cry their own small ways.  
But yet 'tis marvel I must needs live lone,  
I that would tell of knowledge gone awry,  
And all the heaven that doth dower the world,  
And all the fullness of the days to be.  
Each hath his work ; alas, alas for mine ;  
I hope it may not seem to be undone.  
Where blind eyes fail I gaze, but those old days  
Rush back to mar. In our due natural life,

Where glow of sense foils barren rack of brain,  
 Wreathing its soothing charms and bringing peace,  
 Had I lived happy with no sting or stab,  
 And with pure pleasure kept myself in joys  
 That make toil lightsome,—working out a sphere  
 Of help and love ; but ah, these dreams are void,  
 Pure joys are banned and nature's ways defiled ;  
 The day is not, and all the evil rules :  
 I am waxed faint. The fire of one strong man  
 Is proof of God to myriad weaker souls,  
 For ne'er from nought, for nought, is growth of good.  
 There are yet good men, howsoever damned  
 By certain ones so specially elect,  
 That they forget that we are all God's sons.  
 Which doth the heart believe in,—life or creed ?

Work is belief ; for whether is more sure,  
 If from one self-same tree-shoot, year by year  
 Of goodly fruit thou hast, thereby to tell,  
 This tree, self-proven by its love, is good :  
 Or, marking forests singing, we are fair,  
 To say their fruit shall fail not,—constant aye,  
 Though blight make false, or worm should hide within ?

Here is there rest, and voices come from far,  
 And whence I know not, and they whisper me,  
 Till hope glows forth, and like the evening star  
 Makes the void luminous ; and skies drop peace.

Would'st thou bid raise such curtain, choose the glare  
Of life that has lost divineness? I go forth,  
And see mean men with store of petty laws,  
Teaching their children all their worldly ways;—  
The worst fruits gathered, and the highest scorned.  
I look around with aching eyes, and see  
Men that choose ease, with an averted face  
Within sweet solitary bowers asleep;  
Men lost and chained in labyrinths of faith,  
Men with tired eyes despairing of the light,  
Men that have waited all their lives for nought,  
And lose the clue and cannot see the dawn;  
And men that wear out anxious nights and days,  
Fighting for power, which, so they chance to get,  
They know no use of, seeing no fair goal,  
Nor having purpose that transcends themselves.  
These the world crowns for want of nobler brows:  
But though it worship, they shall never add  
One cubit to their spirit-stature thus.  
Smooth shrouds of gloss and fair extern I see,  
But no live furnace all aglow beneath  
The ashes and the smoke. New germs increase;  
Men shall be sated of the husks ere long.  
The balances are drifted all awry—  
One scale in marble and the other in mud.  
The world smiles yet, within the gauded halls

To see smooth idle men, with careless hearts  
Fed out of others' toil; and in the slime  
What should be bloom of tender maidenhood,  
Made sour by famine, fouled by filthy air,  
While death's cold finger strips the blasted fruit.  
Ah limbs that would be fair, O hearts that pulse  
With a like blood as beats in dainty maids,  
How shall our eyes see heaven athwart your tears?  
Where art thou, hope? There yet are noble lives  
Fighting the dragon of the others' sloth.  
Like fiery coursers to a huge rock chained,  
They strive, with torrents in their burning veins!  
One falls with heart-strings rent; another tires;  
But these strain on until the mass takes life,  
Shifts on its base: then groans the mighty pile,  
Following the fire that those fierce nostrils breathe.  
The way hath been made known; the light sleeps not,  
'Tis but in slumber to renew its strength.  
Ah me, the shout that shall ring o'er the land,  
When men are free, and live in growth of joy,—  
Themselves the only doorway that hides heaven.  
The leaven works, the rock begins to shake,  
The banyan grows,—I shall not eat the bread.

Doth not this irk? I warned such wanderings:  
Yet thine eyes say thou hearest. As for me,



A blast blows on me, and awakes my dreams.

We tread the confines of a double sphere,  
From grade to grade half-earthly, half-divine ;  
With shifting home, as life's strange ladder's rung  
Is higher or lower. And some are kin to death,  
With misty memories that do cross and change,  
Catching the very phantoms as they roam.  
Others are lower on the linked long line,  
That leads below our knowledge and above :  
Of growth we all have our eternity.

The better-mated with this heavy earth,  
Have rule of it—oft grievous to the free.  
A child of passionate soul and tender nerves,  
Brought up and reared by elders of slow sense,  
Bears many a woe and hath an anguished heart.  
But, as it grows, its life is beaten down  
To the dead dullness of their denser wits,  
Or, being strong, it rises o'er the bonds,  
Conquers unseen, and moulds its own clear way,  
But yet with straining oft and many a pang.  
Now, spirit-birth the grosser lives weigh down,  
And these find joy in lordship of the world,  
Having their worship from their crowds of kin,  
And rich successes among meaner things :  
The few souls drinking of the deeper life,  
Let the world slip and so the days are marred.

The cunning ones have piled aloft their powers,  
Their sumptuous wealth, and all their show of pride,  
To blind the eyes. When shall the fire-sword wake,  
And smite their heaps, and fling their burdens off?  
One lightning spark shall rend a mighty mass:  
When shall the sleeping souls essay their strength?  
The world misknows them; shall it not crouch down,  
To own the dawning of the nobler light?  
Alas they fail! I see them journey on,  
Borne down by the weight of isolated days;  
Wrestling all vainly with a tired despair,  
Or losing heed, and dragging noble fire  
Beneath defilement's lees. Ah broken lives,  
Shall no meet channel open for your streams?  
We are too great to learn! are we not great,—  
Chiefs over creatures that are born below us,  
Lords with domain o'er lands we fashioned not,  
Having by gift the all that is of ours?  
So—princes born, without the need of fight—  
How boast a glory never won by us,  
Who take allotted place as easy kings—  
Being the topmost fruit of earth-star's trees?  
So meanly happy in our sordid paths,  
So vauntful e'er of unearned chieftainry—  
When we are meanest of a higher sphere,  
We may chance mourn, that, from the uphill ways,

We shrank and yielded, cowering neath the weight  
And toil of choosing once the part of men.  
Ah souls scarce oped ; O weakly-wingèd ones,  
That wait so long within the narrow nest,  
And gilding it, deem that ye have gained heaven ,  
I hear words that ye hear not. How ye strive  
To crush me for it ! When shall child with child  
Join palms and cease to wrangle, finding each  
The gain of that same journeying hand in hand ?

Teach me, great Heaven, to bear my littleness,  
And learn thy love, till bud of mine be oped,  
That is so laggard, or thy stretched-out arm  
Would long ago have drawn it nearer thee.  
Uphold ! I tremble at infinity,  
And shudder as with dread of holiness :  
Can the dark mole conceive of light, or I,  
That am of earthly eyes, know aught divine ?  
Ah, whence comes daring to say words of heaven,  
To stretch out palms unto the teeming skies ;  
To bind the crosses and the tears of men  
With the smooth order of the burning stars ?  
The vastness crushes. Oh, life is too great !

Here is there rest until my feet draw nigh  
To the valley of the mystery—growing old,  
And a dim childhood, not of joy, that shakes  
On the dark verge of the great flood of death ;

Where limbs, life-shivering, are tossed and swayed,  
On howling wilds and water-wilderness,  
Into a pale cold calm :— again I rave.  
But hands arise and soothe me on the brows,  
And voices fill me with bright hope anew :  
The aged earth is young amid the skies,  
And full of youth are her age-weary ones.”

· Thus far he spoke. Silent, and pondering  
Those strange-toned words, I watched the crimson spark  
Die in gray ashes on the western verge :  
Then turned to part. With bended head he leant  
On a seared tree, whose one remaining shoot  
Blossomed to westward.

Peace lay upon his brows,  
Peace as of night and stars. His eyes and soul  
Had caught the sunlight where the earth and skies  
Closed it from me, and, with the darkening night,  
Wove the great shadow that his soul passed through,—  
Like a gold arrow from a silver bow.

## A ROMANCE OF REST.

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O'ER-WROUGHT and worn by burning heart's  
desire

For objects brooded long, and yet as stars,  
That answer the dim light of eyes with theirs,  
But come not nigh, one leisure morn I left  
The gaunt brick buildings, and the weary streets  
Of the dull town that sucked my life away :  
For I was ill at ease, and saw not clear,  
Meet purpose that should strengthen me through toil.  
The sun-glow whispered of the fragrant meads,  
Of shadowy leaves light airs make tremulous,  
Of fountains flowing cool on thirsty nerves.  
I went to seek a friend who might prescribe  
A something, which, if such a something be,  
Should be a balm to heal of weariness,—  
A clue to some glad vista crossing life.  
No proud world-paths trod he, but, gentle-born,  
Had sought retirement when his father lost,  
All but a scanty part, his luckless wealth ;

And being lover of all strange sweet things  
The Life Divine calls forth, and maketh fair,  
From the morn-marriage of the dew and sun,  
He chose to habit but a rustic's cot ;  
And finding sympathy with life of flowers,  
He learned of them so deeply, he was known  
By many studious men in many lands.

Thither from town I bent my lagging limbs ;  
Whirled first by rail to where the hills advanced  
Green-covered mossy feet ; then up the slopes  
Did fare by stony lanes, the which perchance,  
In ancient winter ragings from those heights,  
The stream had worn,—that now beneath man's will,  
Made subject and obediently tame,  
Flowed gravely toward a reservoir, to feed  
The dust-dry thirst of distant towns below.  
A little further, and the lane struck off,  
Just where far ocean glimmered in the west,  
Into a wider road whose hollowed slabs,  
So knit time breaks his teeth thereon, proclaimed  
The Roman passed that way. Again a lane,  
Whence led a grass-grown path, o'ershadowèd  
By groves of interlacing shrubs, whose arms  
Opened an entrance to the homely door.

Him whom I sought I found, I found him thus ;—  
To make your memories as fair as mine—

Bathed o'er the brows in floods of aubry gold,  
That were no flowers of youth, but sunny-shed  
O'er gathered silver of his crescent years.  
Upright upon a chair of dark-hued oak,  
Carved by some kinsman in an idle hour,  
With shield and spear-shafts blossom-canopied,  
He sat and gave me welcome from the heart,  
No whit made cold in polished careful words,  
That gild the lacking of an empty soul ;  
But of the plain strong-fibred homely tongue. .  
He had a posey of wild woodland growth,  
The down-winged ragwort and the meadow-sweet,  
A rare fern-spray and golden tuft of moss,  
And as I entered was dividing them,  
By all the runes their leaves and petals to'd,  
Of myriad diverse life that hides therein,  
To give the kindreds beauty, each its own.

Old friends—we took up tangle-threads of talk,  
Touched oft before,—of dreams of happiness,  
And chill as one awakes, of pleasure's toil,  
And quietude the sweeter from past pain ;  
Of unrest's weariness, and of sweet balm  
To labour given, in wondrous contraries,  
That twine and change, indissolubly twin.  
I spoke of drouth whose fever burned my heart,  
Denying water to my thirst, when, as I strayed

O'er barren fields of negatives and doubt,  
The soul refused the ancient oases,  
And no straight path seemed fair, but all deadhued.  
He smiled as if he knew such words are nought  
Save a child's tear to dim a summer day ;  
And gave me these few words to ponder o'er—  
“ There is an inner soul to things, but seek  
We deep enough with loving. Every art,  
And fresh green place of truth lies in no wall  
That binds it straitly as a swathing-band,  
But has some hinting as of heavens afar.  
Pride will not find it, nor shall hatred know.”  
Then he spoke somewhat sadly, as I thought,—  
“ Within the flow of youth there comes a day,  
When diverse streams rush in upon the soul ;  
And these may turn two ways ; whereof the one  
Swells in a fountain of a vigorous course  
In its due way, and findeth channel sweet,  
And oftentimes a flower-bud on the bank ;  
But there is fear that after other wise,  
The stream may break, and be so cut and marred,  
It shall be weary ere it find the sea.  
The soul takes its seven others, weaker, worse ;  
And hath no rest or purpose, being turned  
And beaten this and that way hopelessly.  
Seems for a while there is no spark of light



Shed to illumine the fruitless barren ways,  
Yet is there point wherein the patient eyes  
May find their stay : there is some warp of right,  
That, rightly clung to, leads from out despair ;  
But first must courage make a resolute stand,  
And with keen knife lop many a tangle off,  
And growth of weed, unflinchingly, whate'er  
Of blood be at the root. So shall the stream  
Flow in new channel, clear with joyous way."

Long converse had we in the window-niche,  
While winds, impatient in the ivy-leaves,  
Said "Come, O come to us" and whispered low  
Their tales of couches with the heaven for roof,  
Tapping the lattice in their ecstasies ;  
Till I, in envy of their joyous hearts,  
Longed to drink in the air, and be a boy,  
Taught by the breezes of the hill-side school.  
We wandered out by sheep-paths toward the moor,  
Staying our feet, where all things seemed to join  
With summer to make glad ; and resting there,  
Thus in calm music rippled forth his words—  
"Yield thee childlike to perfect rest, and o'er  
Thy soul shall quiet steal. Let close thine eyes  
And give the aching hunger of thy soul  
To ope and feed on dripping dews of joy :  
From skies and leaves of whispering trees they fall,

Like happy bird-songs on thy fairest thoughts.  
If somewhere lurk not vision of the love  
Set deep in all things, get thee back again  
Into the busiest world ; my medicine  
Hath nought in thee, and toil alone and grief  
Shake off this weariness. Impatience burns to act,  
And sore desires are as a goad to man  
Toward effort. Ere yet half-known, say'st thou that  
    life

Sees all its dreams are wasted, and the buds  
Whose blossomings were rose are dry and dead ?  
Before the winds of utter winter blow,  
Some seed doth fall from out the withering flower,  
Or a new root doth grow, or in some way  
It is not wholly lost. Is this so hard  
To learn,—that sleep and trouble have no power  
At quenching life, which if we seek for it  
Will sing one day of all its purposes ?”  
There was a certain magic in his eye  
That soothed like languors of a drowsy mead ;  
His words grew mellow as my soul grew calm—  
“ Give up thy bruised heart unto nature's rest,  
The Sabbath-balm that earth breathes out on man ;  
Turn from the weariness of weary things,  
And dream, with me, one day that we shall pass  
The misty avenues of cloud, and climb

Their snowy peaks that rise to the afar,  
Till, lost in golden hues, a pure-winged dawn  
Shall bear us onward unto happy isles.  
Dream, dream, but ever working toward the morn."

"Heather makes pillows of a matchless couch ;  
Rest thee a while, and let the summer sun  
Play slantwise o'er thy brows, 'tween finger tips  
Made rosy in the light ; and watch its rays  
Sheening swift endless playfulness of fire  
Upon the rich and purple-budded fells.  
List to the chauntings of uncultured notes  
From the clear throats of linnet and of lark,  
Accompanied on fibres of dark leaves,  
By breeze-notes gentle in their dreams divine.  
Watch the slow golden fleeces as they rove  
To whispered orders of the quiet wind ;  
And, if thou wantest jewels, catch the glint  
That diamonds the granite here and there,  
Sun-given to return a brighter ray."

Smiling, he left me, and the drowsy airs,  
Wafted from life-springs, and the perfect throat  
Of nature, where she sat away from men,  
Were as a boat that rocked me to and fro  
Upon the dancings of an ether sea.  
The moments flitted soft and slow, the nerves

Learning the while accord and tuneful ease.  
Sweet visions touched me in their hide-and-seek,  
Faster than I could follow; then I felt  
The magic of a childlike sleepfulness.  
Strange pictures rose, and fairies danced around  
Wave-fashion, swaying like blown mists at morn.  
Soft songs they sang, whose tones were shadowed  
    out  
On the dim dream-light of a hazing brain.  
One, clothed in petals like a lily bud,  
Led off low chauntings like to summer rain,  
Calling her mates to see the idle thing  
Outstretched upon their sweetest pasturage.

“ Hither!—Aura who watchest  
    The blooming of grass;  
And bring Myrrha who beckons  
    The bees, as they pass,  
To sip her flower dainties,  
    To kiss her and pass.

And thou sweet one who makest  
    Sun-blossoms to smile,  
With thy magical laughter  
    The weary beguile.

And thou, who in perfume  
Art lost and at rest,  
Shed a cloud o'er his nostril,  
And faint on his breast.

Hither!—Clytie who sailest  
On couch of sun-beam ;  
Dance over his eyelids  
In convolute gleam ;

And press them as gently  
As dewdrops asleep,  
Lest, haply o'erwearied,  
In dreamings he weep.

And thou naiad of freshness,  
Sweet first maid of morn,  
Of the charm of thy quiet  
Be lullabies born.

And haste, thou fantastic  
Who welkin dost rove,  
Bring a cloud of old roses  
To blossom new love.

And come, russet elfet  
Of lichen and moss,  
Be the head velvet-pillowed  
That fever doth toss.

List, thou who dost dwell in  
Pearl tints of the moon,  
With fresh rings of halo  
His temples be strewn.

Come all with quick tripping  
Of undulant feet,  
With mingling of voices  
His sleep-songs to greet.

Wing soft airs and fan him  
As cool as the night,  
When the darkness gives way to  
The first hue of light ;  
And the star singeth faintly  
And fades out of sight.

Come, my harper, who stringest  
Light eddies of wind,  
Be the notes that thou singest  
A charm to imbind ;

To bind him to slumber  
A magical sleep,  
Where woes without number  
Forget how to weep.

Come shafts of sunbeamings,  
And bloom of the heather,  
Weave garlands of gleamings  
In sweet sprays together ;

To wind o'er his senses,  
To wreathe the dream-soul,  
While ye whisper from whence is  
The charm the fays stole.

Ye maids of the dew-clouds;  
Drip pearls in sweet sips,  
From whence in the blue crowds  
The balm for parched lips :

And be it as nectar,  
Whose soul shall arise,  
And carry grief's spectre  
Away to far skies.

And the mystical runing  
Of nature be sought,  
Whereto in attuning  
Be ecstasy wrought.

Haste now, sweet my maidens,  
To do my behest,  
And in choirs of dream-cadence  
To sing him to rest."

Through the commingling lashes of mine eyes,  
Clad in an opiate haze of rose peered she,  
And sang, in breath-soft whispers, harmonies  
Unto the airs at play. Then rose the choir  
Of myriad elves, whose dance was in the sun,  
Whose song was joy, whose feet were little bells,  
That chased away loud sounds, they were so sweet,  
And gentle-voiced as are the murmuring flowers.

"Weary man, weary man,  
Drowsily happy man,  
Welcome of singing we give to thy sleep ;  
Gently thy brow we fan,  
Chaunting our hymn to Pan ;  
Rest on our couches who sing thee to sleep.



Sun-songs are of the van,  
First of the fairy clan,  
    Leading to dreams of bright harvest to reap :  
Eke hath her dirge began  
Murmurous oceän  
    Telling of rest in the calm of the deep.  
Sorrow hath found her ban  
In all sounds silvan,—  
    Heather-stringed music the gentle winds sweep.  
Each singeth ‘Weary man,  
Dream be thy talisman,  
    Loose thee from cares as thy watching we keep.’  
Brown in the summer tan,  
Bend we low till we can  
    Through the dewed lashes of weary eyes peep,  
Chaunting of beauty, an  
Iris to faces wan,  
    Gleaming through tears of the cares that would weep.  
Rest is for whoso can  
Brave to his spirit’s plan  
    Though he be weary, yet fear not the steep.  
Weary man, weary man,  
Free for a happy span,  
    The hush of our singing shall soothe thee to sleep.”

I dreamt, and was in fairy palaces

Singing, myself, sweet burthens of sweet dreams,  
In the blest nurture of an endless day ;  
But a king came, with tones of loud command,  
Shaking the treasurehouse of love and sleep.  
Looking on me with cruel smile he said—  
“ What rareness must thou be ; a butterfly,  
Just where the heather mingles with thy hair,  
Seeks to take honey, or to learn thy dreams.”  
Alas ! it spread the gauzes of its wings,  
And, flying, robbed me of the maiden elves,  
Who yet did leave me of their fragrant spells.  
The visioned king of the huge voice stood by,  
Shaking with pleasant laughter, that so soon  
A restless mind should find child-restfulness.  
I made him know his royal violent voice  
That cruelly shook my store of dreams away ;  
And now again we communed, now again  
Of pain, but me the rosy fay-light filled,  
And sadness was sublimed from out my heart,  
Whence tranquil thoughts arose, and a resolve  
Came new again, and, as I deemed, was clenched,—  
To quest beyond life's husk and empty shell,  
Deeper in hope to find the kernel hid.  
'Twas sweet to listen to his soothing words,  
Who, from soul-communings with nature long,  
Was genial in his converse as the spring.

He set his fables somewhat in this wise.—  
“See'st thou the languor of the swallow's flight?—  
Leaving her arrowy course, her strained vans  
Faint quivering, part way to earth she droops,  
With spotless breast abandoned to the air,  
That cools the white fair inward of her wings.  
So make thyself white-wingèd reveries,  
From buoyant play of nature's gladsome breath,  
To float thee, o'er all depths of weariness,  
Into that kingdom which the soul can make  
By gathering from each mead it passes by.”

“But weariness cedes oft to no bright dream,  
But reigns her evil reign and blights all flowers;  
How shall one vanquish her and live in peace?”  
I said to try him, and he answered me—  
“To drive out tediousness, take work, whate'er  
Be next thy hand, but work the ore out deep,  
Or never shalt thou see the gold of it.  
To drive out evil surest, space to space,  
Fill full the heart with beauty's inner soul,  
Whence fall degraded all things foul and mean:  
Maybe it holds but little at the first,  
But broadens it, the more one garners there.  
Truth is so various, neither change nor cloy  
Can enter, so but earnest be the hand  
That gleans. Each gleaner's sack is pressed and full,

With no two grains alike, and never one  
The perfect type of aught his neighbour bears.  
Truth, right, and beauty, trined, are worship-meet,  
And foul and evil things live hand-in-hand ;  
Where beauty is, lives joy not far away ;  
And beauty dowers strength, and leaveth sloth.  
This is the teaching of the summer hours,  
That love be garnered till the winter come.  
But why teach I," said he, " I who stand lone,  
Save for the flowers by day-time, and by night  
The heaven-kissing stars, and, day by day,  
The loving sunlight that comes forth and dies,  
Gentle as tears, the morn-tide, and afeard,  
With evening lapse unto a golden death ?  
How should I counsel journey through a crowd  
That wars so far from me, whose ears the rather  
Love voices of the hillside and the vales,  
Made music to the wind-song of the brook,  
And trembling trees with many a poet-bird,  
Than jangling voices of earth-thronging men.  
Why should I prate at all ? With me thou hast  
The awe, the solitude, the love that is  
The infinite inter-communing of soul ;  
And ill should I teach, thus so far removed  
From all the needs and modern ways of men ;  
Perchance the dream befitteth not the day ;

Each hour doth build and each destroy, but yet  
That warp of right I spoke of, it is true,  
Whate'er mock-suns may rise or skies be veiled.

I have a little memory, all in faint  
And faded hues, of a young flower long dead,  
That, while it lived, breathed pure life unto me,  
And, in my heart-roots planted, there entwined  
Sweet kindly arms around me, that grew bright  
Even to budding, for sweet love was root.  
This flower was fair, and love in both of us  
Did grow and multiply to such return  
Of larger love, that lights before our eyes  
Were pearly bright and all the shadows rose ;—  
Till drooped and died my flower, and now am I  
But what you see. . . I shun the hasting world,  
Turned o'er to loving of the flower-full hills.  
Hast thou then nought to cling to, being weak,  
Hast thou no bud to cherish, being strong?

As I in my small purposes have joy,  
So mayest thou in action's fighting-field.  
Let no despairs veil o'er thine eyes with film,  
But ever wrestle, as with boughs that ope,  
Just o'er the tangled gloom, to stars alight.  
For full content I never bid thee strive,  
For noble workers have not drowsy eyes ;  
Yet seek the fount that is thy highest thought,

Whose streams well forth upon the smaller pains ;  
And keep unwitherèd the budding flowers  
Whose growth is deeper than the earth can know.  
Till all souls know of happiness, are we  
Waiting our perfect fullness, that always  
Is crescent unto God's infinitudes.  
'Words, words' I hear one say, 'lax empty words ;  
No musics play on such an useless string,  
Action is growth's sole food, and idle talk  
Grows wearisome.' Truth, truth, but half the whole.  
The work grows easier so we can keep fair  
Some flowers for our bud thoughts to cluster round."

Thus gathered I a spray of healing balm  
But yet applied it not. One day there comes  
The mocking spirit that cries "fool" and laughs,  
Making the faiths seem shaken : half the heart  
To unbeliefs slips frightened. Then one tires,  
And seeks a drowsing for his sullied eyes ;  
And oft alloys look fairer than the gold.  
One of pure wisdom once in times long past  
Fabled a parable of fruitless soils :  
The skies may change and centuries may roll,  
But the same fights are fought unto the end.

The moorland cool transplanted to the glare  
Of the tense city-life, some days may-be

Were happier than the rest. Then rose again  
Inquietude, and even rest's sweet tones  
Did twine and so entangle with my dreams,  
That cool made thirst again, and I was tossed  
Like waves beneath a dry wind, sleeplessly.  
I knew for why : there was a gift of choice  
'Twixt a closed bud and pleasant full-blown weed.  
With fancied ease I fenced about my heart,  
Having no trust to wait, till that hid bud  
Should burst into the fruit I knew it bore.  
The stars wax faint : if I make bold and choose  
I know they shall shine ever. Coward me!—  
To sell a birthright for a little ease.

## TO A DYING KING.

---

WHEN God alone was old, and this fair world  
Within the mystery of his fire was curled,  
He made thee King, O thou of dust and clay,  
That souls might struggle with thee unto day ;  
That weak white sprays within the void of night  
Might bloom toward colours of creative light.  
O old sad King, thou hast thy hand on us,  
Dire oftentimes with weight dispiteous :  
So we bow down thou hast a master's rod,  
And givest weary downward ways to plod ;  
But when we look toward dawn we 'scape from night,  
E'en far enough to fling on thee despite.  
Thou art but as a bondservant, and round  
About us as a guarding casket bound,  
Within whose bars a short despair we moan.  
Thou art a false-named King, for of thine own  
Thou hast no soul or any great empire :  
Though atom roll round atom o'er the gyre



Of spheres that circle never to an end,  
Thou reignest not, but as a slave doth bend.  
Of thy gross bulk we are the puny lords,  
And when we will, we lash thee as with cords ;  
And flaming brands our eager souls do wave ;—  
We conquer thee, we spurn thee ; thou art slave.  
Yet dost thou cage us in a grievous rack,  
With doom to work that ne'er a bar grow slack,  
But cherished by us our obstruction be :  
Yet gains some other form its growth through thee,  
Else wert thou nought, but some fair infant soul  
Hath room within thy coverture to boll,  
And burst in flower, by thy sad arms made fair.  
Thus, till one day, that dawns with mystic air,  
Part with a rending chasm thee and breath ;  
And thou dost fall into an empty death,  
But we rise great and unconstrained of thee,  
Made as the wind whose song is ever free.  
This if we triumph ; if we give thee rule,  
The feet sink ever in a noisome pool,  
Where no fresh springs bring waters sweet and bright,  
But darkness gathers on the wings of night.  
One sole star shines : if hope to strive be swift,  
And purpose strengthen, the fouled limbs to lift,  
The heart may yet grow pure, and take her own,  
And come to triumph, but with many a groan,

And dire lamenting for that weak descent,  
That made so slow the feet's establishment.  
Ah, thou with swaddling-clothes and curb hast sway  
O'er all things living in this infant day,—  
O'er sweet flower-life that strains a gummy band  
And flutters open like a lady's hand,—  
Brute-life and moanings hid beneath the sea,  
And our life, nobler, being large and free,  
Yet wrung to tears, that as they rise and swell,  
Drop clouded music like a mournful bell.  
Mid these we rise, and silver drops that flow  
Take golden sunlights to appease their woe :  
Children gain youth, and youth expands to age,  
And all are learners in thy gloom-bound cage,—  
Some to be strong and patient under thee,  
Some to be sweet and beautiful in thee,  
For thou art never wholly dark and sad,  
But catchest hues and forms to make us glad,—  
Coruscant sometimes from the land of dreams  
That feeds the life from its own living streams.  
Thou art dethronèd from us day by day,—  
From individual empery of clay,  
And we by flashes of our souls mould thee  
Nearer our image, by some slow degree,  
But, being tyrant, oft thou seem'st a curse.  
Yet dost thou take our little ones to nurse,

Given to thee by the Father over all,  
Laid in thine arms by the Mother of us all :  
By this we know it right we are thus barred,  
Although thy hand of teaching may be hard.

## THE VISION OF POIEIDOLON.

---

I POIEIDOLON sat beside the sea,  
Watching with tranquil eyes the restless tide,  
As winds strode by along the line of foam,  
Marring the wave-crests as they rose at flow.  
A huge rock hid me in its silent lee :  
A youth came by ; I saw his haggard face,  
Until he stayed his foot with front seaward.  
Winds tossed his hair like foam-flakes ; he the while  
Upheld his hands to where the waves met sky,  
And with drooped form breathed thus a doubtful  
prayer—

“Teach me, O Father, somewhat of the life  
That men say when to further life we pass  
Over the stepping-stones of death, divides,  
And one small part, made glory-glad, is rapt  
Within the heaven that is girt by thee ;  
But on a great broad way is driven far  
A mighty groaning crowd of wayfarers,

Whose dire eternity is bound with chains,  
In black far caverns fierce with flames and hates,  
Whose habitants may never see thy face,  
While torment and despair are infinite :  
Teach me of this ; it is too hard for me."

I sat there open-eyed. A wingless form,  
The while deep silence gathered round, I saw  
Uplift itself from foam and winds and skies,  
Lucent and noiseless ; breathing answer thus—

"Come thou with me, O brother human soul :  
Mark, mind and hold." He struck the earth : it  
heaved

And we were in a neighbouring noisome town,—  
The gloomiest ways where no aurora gleams.  
Then issued voice again "Choose thou a man  
Viler than either parent, when the twain  
Have lived no life save vice and joyless joy ;  
Choose him who knows not any holy thing,  
Nor shews a seed of beauty in his heart ;  
Choose him who hath no mastery of soul,  
But tyranny of appetite, who loves  
Nought save his body, like a dark soiled garb,  
That he hath fouled to live his life therein."

The youth, obedient, sought and found a man,  
With cunning brain enough to be a thief,  
And the brute courage meet for murder-deeds,

Whence had he gained ungodly gold whereon  
His passions had grown fat and merciless,—  
Sucking with great gross lips his dying heart.  
The spirit raised his lambent-flaming hand  
Athwart the youth who stood afeard and pale,—  
“Change flesh with him and have thou trust in me.”  
Trembling, I saw a double flash fly forth,—  
One cheerless, dying as from lack of oil,  
One glowing, and yet shrinking almost wan :  
Then either soul looked out from other’s eyes.  
The soul that prayed, obedient, hid within  
The tomb a brother on himself had wrought ;  
And, feeling all the fire of parchèd glands,  
Called hoarsely loud for wine, but none did heed.  
Then searched he furiously about the house,  
Seeking for flame to make his fever cool,  
But finding none, he bent his eager steps  
Abroad, all uncontrolled, in search of spoil.  
But in the way he met the wizard’s sword,  
Whom first he cursed outright for being there,  
To stay him from his plundering intent ;  
But then a shudder passed across the frame  
He habited, and it was hell to him,  
To feel the heavenly light on his dull eyes.  
He fell to earth and sobbed out half his heart,  
And groaned with woes and nameless agonies,

Knowing the foulness of his sepulchre.

Then from the coin where his own body lay,  
Serving the thief and murderer for home,  
A voice came trembling as with unused words,—

“ It is my little sister, my only one ;  
She kissed me ere she turned away and died :  
She kissed me saying ‘ Brother, I see lights  
Greater than is the sun when, a few times,  
In the dark year, he finds this little room.  
They seem to speak to me, and, brother dear,  
For my sake, when I die, do right, and work :  
Kiss me a promise to remember this.’  
Ah ! it has gone. What is it, why is it ?—  
There is a darkness hides her far from me.  
She died and I forgot her, and the light  
To me came never. Now I feel alone,  
As if some one had touched me, and then fled.  
Ah, what new thing comes, catching at my throat ?  
I ne’er felt thus alone, aforetime ; now  
Seems some strange fear comes at me unawares.  
How dark it is, and somehow flushed with light,—  
Were it not hidden. O what to do, to give,  
To tear away the shroud that is on it,  
And see it once again so mellow-bright ?  
Sister, sister, pity ! come to me !  
Ah, she is there, but I, I may not see :

But I will go, if I be damned for it,  
Setting my face toward her, with darkest dark  
Behind me. Though but one step on I plant  
Before black death, I will, I will find her,  
And she shall tell me where to find her stars."

The spirit-agony upon the earth  
Was stilled at that strange voice; the weary man  
Forgot the burden of the death on him,  
And, looking up unto the radiant face,  
He said "I deemed my soul was waxen strong,  
But I could not endure this for a day;  
And how can any bear this body's weight?  
Shall he be stronger than I deemed myself?"  
Answered the vision "He hath seen the light,  
And is gone back to his sister's memory,  
And she will take him in her maiden arms,  
Whereby the tangle-threads his life hath wound,  
He shall unwind this side or that of death:  
Dire task is it to unwind as to wind,  
Yet doth one gather out of both, and learn  
The good which is not good till it know ill,  
The ill that is not evil to the good:  
To this end all things work, yet spite of this  
Evil is sadly evil all the while.  
The rock foundation of a soul is laid  
That may, in days to come, lift temple-spires:



When strength comes out of knowlédge, he shall be  
Strong to upraise and lead forth other souls  
Sunk in their veiled beginning, like his own ;  
And all the more be strong he was so low,  
With pity greater for his erstwhile need.  
It is no small thing to mould out a soul,  
A growth, a life, an individual flower ;  
'Tis as the glimmer of a new vast world.  
What is delay and what is dark to light ?  
Starlight strikes onwards for its thousand years,  
Kissing with joy new wandering worlds each day ;  
Doth it despair as it flies floating on ?  
Rough stones make strong the toiling eager feet,  
And gloom impels the eye to rend its film.  
All journeys tend unto one goal, the same,  
Yet ever various in its lovelit hues :  
It broadens e'er as we stretch thitherward,  
Though myriad years we wander faint afar.  
Work, watch and wait ; what know'st thou more of life,  
Than meadow-flowers that see the oxens' eyes  
Do comprehend them, or than they read thine ?  
With other eyes than thine how should'st thou see ?  
All things, seen corner-wise alone, seem crookt,  
Shift, and are various ; every point of view :  
One only, with the light of infinite eyes,  
Sees the large sphere that gradual growth fulfil.

How? dost thou think the mortal gaze extends  
O'er all the facets of a crescent life?  
Look on it as a hidden sphere of fire,  
Wreathen and covered in dark swathing bands:  
Here gleams in one interstice one faint spark;  
How shalt thou know it for the only one?  
But these things are too dim and far for thee;  
Seek rest in labour, lest thou overlade  
Thy human heart, whose trembling strings are weak.  
The sole step on toward light is love of right;  
All fears and cowardice and make-believes,  
Being hollow, break, and shew no bud within.  
Thou may'st be weary; that same toil doth teach  
And point to aims that laugh at weariness:  
Strait rivers cannot widen all at once:  
A perfect law hath only its one way;  
Thou can'st not break a floweret at the stalk  
And say 'Ill-favoured is the root, and foul,  
The bud alone is fair;' but springs upraise  
The vital juice through many a channel dark.  
Thou hast a clue through all God's mysteries  
Whereby to find a clear way everywhere,  
And scan the skies with humble trustful eye;  
But seek not with thy hand to cover them  
Or with a finger measure out the heavens.  
What room have ye in one child-life to hold

All vast eternities, ye small faint souls,  
That are yet bound in swaddling bands of time?"

A lightning flashed and faded. That foul man  
I saw walk staggered as by evil dreams.  
The surf beat shore before mine eyes again,  
But none did walk thereon. I by the sea  
Wept, for I seemed so weak, but rose to work  
That hands might strengthen, and the soul grow fair,  
From the wide choice that is beneath the sun.

SONG. FAIRYLAND.

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SWEET one, who dwellest by the shore  
Of Fairyland, of Fairyland,  
Whose spell breathes on me evermore  
From Fairyland, from Fairyland,  
Come, as thou camest oft of yore,  
When I was deep in lovers' lore,  
And ever golden seemed the door  
Of Fairyland, of Fairyland.

Bring blossoms with the scents that came  
From Fairyland, from Fairyland,  
And blooming with the rosy flame  
Of Fairyland, of Fairyland ;  
Come, banish all the world and fame,  
But look upon me still the same,  
And call me, by some sweet new name,  
To Fairyland, to Fairyland.

Come, bright in all the golden guile  
Of Fairyland, of Fairyland,—  
An eldorado in thy smile,  
From Fairyland, from Fairyland ;  
Come, rest with me a little while,  
Who fain would follow, mile on mile,  
To where thou art in that far isle  
Of Fairyland, of Fairyland.

O look not coldly on me now,  
From Fairyland, from Fairyland,  
But waft rose dreams about my brow  
Of Fairyland, of Fairyland,  
And with thy balmy life endow,  
As long ago, when love and thou  
Heard echo whisper of my vow  
In Fairyland, in Fairyland.

O brightest of all morns that rise  
In Fairyland, in Fairyland,  
And gentler than the eve-star's eyes  
In Fairyland, in Fairyland,  
Have pity on my longing cries,  
And, ere the lyric suppliance dies,  
Yield thy sweet lips to seal my sighs  
In Fairyland, in Fairyland.

## THE SWORD.

(HUGUENOT.)



LONG years ago, through weary wars,  
I see a faulchion's silver edge  
Flash shivers like the wind-blown stars,  
That freak with snow the gable ledge.

The sword shone silverlike in sheath,  
And gleamed red gold on our helm's crest,  
And all of mine adored to death  
That symbol flaming east and west.

Our hearts and arms did yearn to feel  
The fingers winding round the hilt,  
And when the scabbard bared the steel,  
Ah for the noble blood we spilt!

Long years my fathers led the braves  
At the stern bidding of that sign;  
And if the battle fields were graves,—  
What better death comes by the Rhine?

The noble corsers bit the dust,  
The noble name rang o'er the lands ;  
The symbolled sword must have its lust ;  
And drank but glory in our hands.

Our vassals yielded rights and gold ;  
The King gave honours and delight ;—  
For why ?—the sword was never cold,  
And claimed whate'er it loved, of right.

O changing time ! The elders slain  
Within the hottest fire of fray,  
Who then might hope of worlds to gain ;  
To gild the name the years make gray ?

The tree was centred in a boy,  
Soft-nurtured by a mother meek,  
Who murmured songs of peaceful joy  
As oft she kissed the cradled cheek.

The sword 'gan rust within the hall ;  
The widow recked not of the crest ;  
The boy grew to be fair and tall ;—  
Why roams he from his mother's breast ?

His nostril opens to the wind,  
That bloweth crestwise his long hair ;  
Strange mail-plates loveth he to find,  
And dream upon the deep dints there.

Are not the maidens rosy-sweet,  
With blither voices than the birds ?  
Are they not joys to woo and meet,  
With symbol buds and flowerlike words ?

Why are May-garlands dead and brown,  
The rose-red kisses wan and cold,  
The boy's smiles hidden under frown,  
The soft low love-words left untold ?

The symbol in his heart wakes fire,  
Whose flash the opening eye unsheaths ;  
It biteth deep the passion dire,  
That ever sire to son bequeaths.

The brand leaps into blood again,  
The cresset-light is on the hills ;  
Gleams out the crest above the slain,  
Again the name the echo fills.



The years drive on their coursers' pace,  
The sword hath never sleep for long,—  
The vizard ever on the face,  
And ever battle-cries for song.

The blade is rusting in the hall,  
It is not bright or bought for gold ;  
The glory that shone out on all,  
Hath it not faded with things old ?

Alas the chieftains of the eld,  
That wrought no baseness by their death—  
The brand in quivering fingers held,  
The rallying cry the last gasped breath !

What is that mouldered steel to-day,—  
Dull spectre 'neath skies overcast,  
A dead bird's feather bruised and gray ?  
Is no scorn uttered by the past ?

What mockery is the quartered sign  
With all its purple phantoms round !  
Whose word stirs now the vassal line,  
Who shall the victor's bugle sound ?

—Cease not the song, for glory's hand  
Is waiting yet to grasp the hilt ;  
Is there no battle o'er the land,  
Where yet so many tears are spilt ?

Twine balm about the bleeding heart,  
Flash forth the symbol on the knave ;  
Let the sword play its manly part,  
For glory goes not to the grave,

*Jan. 5th, 1869.*

“LIBERTÉ, LIBERTÉ CHÉRIE.”

SONG OF THE SOUL-CAPTIVE.

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WOULD God I could rend them apart,—  
The false claws that cling, and the truth ;  
The serpent that lies round the heart,  
The soul that is strangled in youth.

Would God I could taste thee, and see  
Thy glories of working, of act :  
Proud goddess of liberty,  
Wherein, O wherein have I lacked ?—

That thou frownest, and over my neck  
Shod feet are bound down by a cord,  
That my passion my wrath cannot break ;  
That would fly at the slope of thy sword.

Why, Liberty, iron of hand,  
Dost thou bind me in dungeons of earth,  
With thine eyelight made dark by a band,  
With a dirge or a tear for mirth ?

O deem not I love, though I bear,  
The cold shrunken touch of the world ;  
But wing me a blast to uprear  
Its bitter roots that have curled

Round the life of the longings, and drain  
From the heart of the would-be the power ;  
O come thou as suns after rain,  
Or I die, I die for thine hour.

Be it not I should gather hot pride,  
And vauntings and folly outfling ;  
From bondage but give me to glide—  
Broad air to the strained wing,—

I would scorn, as I scorn myself—  
As a coward, myself as complete ;  
And, scanning for ray the dawn-shelf,  
Would wait, and with ready feet,

For a summit that ever points higher,  
For a dawn that blooms ever to-day,  
For a sky beyond stars to aspire,  
For a stairway to heights ever gray.

I would grow to the love of the dream  
Of all that is noble and fair,  
Glad always, as day in the gleam  
Of the sun on the quivering air.

Be it not that my soul is a slave,  
Beaten down by its bonds and dead ;  
Faint shines it thwart dust of the grave,  
But thou !—O why art thou fled ?

Be it not I am heavy with sin—  
Thou scorning or leaving in fright ;—  
O fill me, O dawn thou within,  
Let me fly on thy wings to the light.

*June, 1867.*

## H A L F W A Y .



**Y**E missed the mark ; the shaft hath idly sped !—  
Did ye draw bow unto the arrow-head ?

The wind hath scattered all, ere ye could bind ;  
Ye prayed for springs, ye sought and could not find.

Did ye set all your souls to break the shell ?  
Go deeper yet, and ye shall find the well.

Despair upon your eyes, how should ye heed  
That round about the well-head's mouth hangs weed ?

Deep in the earth the coolest waters flow ;  
Down in sea-grots the silver pearls lie low.

Hid beneath weft of strings is music's soul ;  
Doth one in drought store in a shallow bowl ?

The hearts of eve and morning flow with balm ;  
Were there no storm, what should ye know of calm ?

Whatever jars make harsh the ways ye wend,  
Press on, and ye shall see the feet ascend.

In labours meet is sown a bud of rest ;  
The wave makes strong so oft it beats the breast.

Height is but depth ; dig deep, ye rise above ;  
Lo ! deep within the heart there lieth love.

## THE KING AND THE COUNCILLOR.

---

WITHIN his balcony, the King  
Sits in black gloom of knotted brows ;  
A crowd sways onward, carrying  
Pale corpses by the royal house.

There many a form, bestained with blood,  
Lies heavy on his brother's breast,  
And drooping mothers' tears, in flood,  
Like moonlight lull the dead to rest.

Each hour to hour, from dawn of day,  
Had echoed bitter wailing words ;  
And when hearts opened not that way,  
A fire arose of crossing swords :

For men had said, and women sobbed  
Sore dirge of burden to the king ;—  
“ O yield again what hath been robbed  
From under freedom's sacred wing.”



The King gave answer with an oath,—  
“ Let all my troops make ready straight ;  
But one is king to-day, of both  
One shall be vassal, by God’s fate.”

The soldiers loathe their arms to bind,  
To crush to earth a brother’s prayer,  
And, by half-heartedness made blind,  
They strike at random men and air.

The baffled monarch swore amain,  
Till cunning crept within his heart ;  
“ We mourn with all our people’s pain,”  
He cried, “ and in their pangs we smart.”

“ We will have counsel on these things,  
That strike out troublousness to mar  
A bounteous reign. Peace menacings !  
And grievance all shall flee afar.”

The people steel their hearts to wait  
On his good pleasure ; till one saith,  
“ Try we his words, they be but prate ;  
See if he have regard for death.”

They carry, by the palace walls,  
The citizen and soldier slain ;  
A dirge floats upward through the halls,—  
“ Honour the dead,” its slow refrain.

It smites upon the kingly ear,  
By young and aged voices said,—  
“ All that look on afar and near,  
A reverence to the noble dead !”

Upon a tawny fell gold-hooved,  
He sits encanopied on high,  
And mutters with a face unmoved,  
“ Before I doff to them, I die.”

A tide upsurges in the crowd,  
And, through the pauses of the song,  
Come voices ringing fierce and loud,  
“ Death to the tyrant were no wrong.”

An aged councillor, unseen,  
Whispers an earnest last appeal ;  
It is, as if it had not been ;  
The roar rings louder, mixed with steel.

The King was like a boar at bay,  
With sullen heat upon his eyes,—  
“The bitterest death shall pride obey,  
Ere I bend to these anarchies.”

Grown red, as in the fire of fight,  
Fierce eyes glare upwards from the crowd,—  
“Blinking and dull in freedom’s light,  
Base crown or baser head be bowed.”

The councillor stepped to the throne—  
That none should hinder—sudden-swift,  
And doffed straightway the jewelled zone.  
The people saw the gold uplift;

The surge of wrath surceased, the roar  
Waxed fainter like an ebbing wave,  
And each man, at his dwelling’s door,  
Said “Mark the reverence the King gave.”

The haughty royal life was gained,  
But his proud eyes for ever more—  
By that one fleck of shaming stained—  
Ean to his saviour’s presence bore.

March 24th, 1869.

## IDYLLIUM.

---

**E**NKINDLED by thy radiant face,  
The eyelids swell and smart,  
The mirror eyeball drinks thy grace ;  
Thou can'st not touch the heart.

Thine influence, like a full spring-moon,  
A tide of rapture sets  
Within the ocean, that so soon  
As thou art gone, forgets.

Thy magic strikes not deep enow,  
Thy smiles as dewdrops roll  
From the heart's leaves, and ne'er can'st thou  
Seize by the eyes the soul.

To the worn heart 'tis honey-sweet  
To have thy soothing nigh ;  
Ne'er passion drags her burning feet  
Within thy lullaby.

Wells forth the idyl, rich and calm,  
The lyric throbs the strings ;  
Thine eyes drip with a sleepy balm  
No broken torment brings.

Art thou content with half a heart,  
Where many a tranquil chord  
Lieth untouched in some strange part,  
Whose doors no key afford ?

Take it, in faith, if so thou wilt,  
And gather, one by one,  
Love-words that, by such lips outspilt,  
Shall swell to antiphon.

So art thou nearer, day by day,  
Unto the inmost shrine,  
And when thou knowest every way,  
Shalt thou be doubly mine.

R A M E S E S .

**M**Y father's bones lie underneath a sand  
Made level and of no significance,  
And he is undiscerned among the dead.

One storm smote all with universal chance ;  
Half died, half lived, but kingless save for me,  
Who saw no slain,—no more my father's head.

The measure of his years I span, and he  
Was lord afar, but I have wider rule ;  
And it is glorious and great and vain.

A broken rod snaps into ridicule,  
To wield, or mark a monarch's empery ;  
And death makes equal with a calm disdain.

Great glory dulls not, like a sick child's eye,  
Yet narrows, as the sands blow, year by year,  
To thicken the faint covering of the tomb.

Now my full fruit of glory doth appear  
Above all meaner shrub, and subject boughs ;  
Ripe autumn is, and follows her the brume.

Eyes scant of light, and slavish similar brows  
Bend down before my bidding word in haste.  
The word that fails, and whispers me the end.

The plains wax weary, and the wides are waste,  
And it is I who overshadowed the day,  
Till the sun set, and the long night descend.

Great wisdom shines in covering garbs of clay,  
Let glory in a vesture be upreared ;  
My memories shall live unto the close.

When the great circle of the years is sphered,  
And sons and sons' sons, numberless, have been,  
I come again with name the whole world knows.

My fame's memorial shall out-flash a sheen  
Changeless through years that fret but to increase ;  
Sons for my head their honours shall have stored.

I shall come forth when the half-myrriads cease,  
A manifest god by all the roll unreaves ;  
I shall come forth, and, like a sun, be lord.

Rock-mass without ; within—acanthus leaves,  
Wherein I shall be pillowed until then,  
Keeping my wisdom's flower in kingly hand.

Come all square-frontleted and cunning men,  
Plan me a house to outlive the stormy roar ;  
Plant me a standard far above the sand.

Paint me a golden symbol of my lore,  
Carve me a record of the fames I win,  
Raise me the rocks, ye myriad slaves, amain.

Fashion a secret chamber far within ;  
There shall I rest, and have a lordly sleep,  
Through the strange night till morning breathe  
again.

Raise me a point of fame as heaven, so steep,  
Let the rocks slant unto that solid peak,—  
The earth the base, the heaven my topmost crown.

Build a strait passage where winds shall be weak,  
Blazon a symbol meet for sons to raise ;  
So shall my name on streams of time flow down.



And when the brethren of the nights and days  
Make equal step ; then as the Sun-god's bloom  
Triumphant springtide sways, he shall cast all

His glory on the summit of my tomb :  
And when he fails beneath the clouds of fear,  
Thereon shall rest, making no shadows fall.

So, twice a year, the splendour of his sphere,  
Radiant upon men's brows, shall make them ring  
With memory of me ; and, when unfold

Their broadest noon the herald flames of spring,  
Shall kneeling crowds, with slanted neck and hand,  
See all my glory in a mist of gold.

ANIMÆ IN MEMORIAM.

1868.

---

O ACHING of passionate heart,  
Undiscerned and misknown ;  
With a yearning that could not depart  
Though the love sat distort on his throne !

O blood-rush too noble to fill  
Any stagnant strait vein ;  
O struggle of good and of ill,  
Undreamt in the passionless brain !

The pygmies that creep and that crawl,  
Could they find thee no place  
In their hearts, that they laugh at thy fall ;  
That they hiss at thy wings in the race ?

O hootings of easy smooth life,  
From a groove small and mean,  
What have ye of the soul-rack and strife,  
What vision of skies unseen ?

O cowardly world, and content  
In a prison of petty ways ;  
When the soul of a Titan is sent,  
Your sky hath too narrow a base.

O earth with a meteyard for heaven,  
That but spans its own length ;  
Content—lapping a sour milk of leaven,  
For fear wine have too noble a strength.

Mean world that hath lost all the grace  
That sees farther than ill,  
And that veilest a righteous face  
To soiled souls ! ah, God loveth them still.

O were there no truth upon high,  
It were weary, withal,  
To fare on in the ring of their cry,—  
In the laugh when the great souls fall.

## THE WORLD BEFORE MAN.

---

A SKY of swollen mists exhaled  
From seething marsh and boundless green;  
A Titan crowd of stems and reeds,  
Wide lakes and burning plains between.

Mad riot and luxuriant growth,  
Festoonery upon each tree ;  
Gross life of verdure sweeping down  
By calm grey rivers to the sea.

The panther's roar is on the air,  
And full of song the jungle-wood ;  
The blue snake winds his coils along,  
And seeks the singing-bird for food.

The heron, by the loamy marge  
Of sheltered shallows, marks the smooth  
Bright silver fishes flash along,—  
Taught keenness by her hunger's tooth.

No voice of order sounds the note,  
No master lords it through the days ;  
The echoes answer from the vales,  
Where but brute wailings sound always.

The trees grow green and brown again,  
The arch is wanting the keystone,  
The life divine hath yet no dawn,  
Or mystic increase of its own.

No temperate footsteps press the meads,  
No face of man turns to the skies,  
No incense-worship floateth forth,  
As morns in rosy flames arise.

The boundless heaven opens not,  
God hath his purpose of delay,  
And man is hidden in his breast,  
Till clouds unclothe the first new day.

But we who wander, where at length  
Humanity comes forth to raise  
A clearer hymning to the stars,  
As the earth's voice, let us give praise.

*26th March, 1869.*

## THE OUTCAST'S SLEEP-SONG.

~~~~~  
"The battle-peace  
Into the heavenly calmness doth surcease;  
And like two doves, the body of the skies  
Calls up the lower sister with her eyes."

DR. J. J. G. WILKINSON, "*Improvisations.*"

~~~~~

SLEEP, sleep,  
O woman wan, that art too weak for grief;  
Thrall now to stormy winds, like a spent leaf  
That no one cares to sheaf!

Sleep, sleep,  
Consumed by anger of unsparing years,  
As tree by tree the wasting winter bares;  
Sleep, careless how life fares!

Sleep, sleep!  
'Tis vain to murmur or to raise lament,  
For I am old, and wrath is wellnigh spent,  
And, somehow, peace is sent.

Sleep, sleep,  
As the keen breath-stroke of the sea-wind dies,  
And pause the moanings of its sobs and sighs ;  
Sleep ; ease the wearied eyes !

Sleep, sleep,  
As every echo of the dirge grows still,  
And broken grasses sleep upon the hill ;  
Sleep off that deathly chill !

Sleep, sleep,  
As all the clamour of the storm renews,  
And bitter winds take all the flowers to bruise ;  
Sleep, with serene eyedews !

Sleep, sleep :  
Pass through the cradles of the rocking foam,  
Leave these sad seas whereon dim shadows roam ;  
Sleep ; waking nearer home !

Sleep, sleep,  
Newborn may-be in unremembered dreams,  
While round about thy soul a new world streams ;  
Sleep ! ah, whereto what seems ?

Sleep, sleep,  
Till pitying friends speak out of those dim lands,  
And make thee fair by soothing hands ;  
Sleep, finding loose life's bands !

Sleep, sleep !  
Ah, whence the light of beautiful surprise,  
Whence the strange pallors that like moons arise  
Upon thine opening eyes ?

Sleep, sleep,  
With last faint look upon the parting pain,  
A new sleep as the eyes close calm again !  
O sleep, what hast thou ta'en ?

Sleep, sleep !  
Hath sleep bound up long-suffered wounds, sweet  
mate,  
Struck when life broke on racks and wheels of fate ?  
Be'lovèd sleep !—come late.

Sleep, sleep  
That happy sleep of certain heritage,  
Whatever joys elude or fevers rage :  
Sleep, sleep, with youth for age !



Sleep, sleep,  
But, O leave me not on this bleak gray shore,  
Where no rest is, but raindrops falter o'er :  
Ask them to ope the door !

Sleep, sleep,  
And give me of the freshness thou dost win  
From out the heaven-sleep thou art happy in ;  
Far, far from stormy din !

Sleep, sleep,  
Wafting me pillows of the gold-warm air,  
To rest my head, till dreams like thine be fair ;  
O give of thy sweet share !

Sleep, sleep ;  
And teach me sleep, for, seems me, cares so hold,  
That very rest doth weary, growing old !  
Come sleep ! life is so cold.

## A SONG NIGH TO DAWN.

---

**H**OW the wind stalks—how drearily up and down,  
Gathering the skies into a cold black frown!  
Sometimes it softens with a sigh of fear,  
No tyrant blast, but lulling on the ear :  
Its heart is sweet, its arms are bitter cold,  
And pluck my rags its fingers lean and bold,  
Hath she this loneliness, this sobbing riot,  
Or the white bosom-rest of pale sad quiet ?  
Is she upon a wild sea-slope, forlorn,  
Chill as her olden love, or is she borne  
By swaying musics, that, in happy ease,  
Bear her above old evil memories ?  
Ah me, how shall I know ? I am alone ;  
She whispers nought to me ; the only moan  
Is of the weariness of winds and waves,  
In prison-houses, under craggy caves,  
Far from the sun. Doth she not mingle there,  
And breathe that pain that is within the air ?

No soul is by. Gray-girdled all around,  
The cold earth echoes me no friendly sound.  
Thereto what binds me? I am old and worn,  
And for things weary grown too calm to mourn.  
What purpose yet is unfulfilled in me?  
Shall there be greater weight of angry sea,  
Shall there be keener teeth to gnaw and rend,  
Shall the hopes alway see the feet descend?  
I am too weak to rage, and sometimes dream  
I hear sweet voices, and a sudden gleam  
Comes flashing, as from other life I hold,  
That groweth rosier as these years grow cold.  
Cometh it toward me, with a gradual pace,  
Taking me more and more to its embrace;  
And when I faint, so worn, and weary thus,  
This life suspires and grows more glorious.  
Therein comes joy, white-crowned with calm that  
brings  
Me raptures greater than the lives of kings;  
And this gray-girdled world is as the sky,  
When stars come forth and sweet moonbeams draw  
nigh.  
I wait, I wait; so soon my failing feet  
Refuse to uphold me, these new friends are fleet,  
And in their arms bear what is me, away,  
Till I grow used unto that dream of day.

With inner meaning winds the dirge along ;  
The wide gray pastures brighten with a song.  
Ah endless mystery ; O wells of sleep,  
That break forth alway from a twilit deep ;  
My feet wax weary, long gone by my noon ;  
The voices whisper they come closer soon,  
And while I linger in a still surprise,  
The heaven drops peace from out its calm grey eyes

## DEDICATION.

OF its first garlands loose my untaught hand ;  
The touch of winter so but one withstand,  
A fairer posey would I fain to bring  
Of summer's joyance and from smiles of spring.

Would I could rid me of the broadening debt  
Of pleasure blown about me,—sweet dreams set  
By subtle passes of a painter's hand,  
And hours enlumined from his splendid land ;

Of sighs made mellowy on the harper's string,  
And floating joys as if a bird did sing—  
Suffusing languors all about me yet—:  
Ah, but 'tis vain to think to pay the debt :

Of thoughts of men who, longer thrice than I,  
Have trod the ways of this God's-mystery ;  
Of whispered words, and voices that came nigher,  
Inbreathen round me like a lambent fire ;

Of pure men's works, and honest deeds and true—  
Within dark skies, oft-times, the only blue—  
Of fruitful seeds that could not flutter by,—  
So deftly sown, they strike root ere they die ;

Of joys that linger long ere they expire,  
Like the last touches of a silver lyre ;  
Of light that love, through eye and eyelid, blew,—  
Still warm on memory with a tender dew ;

Of all the colours and the breaks of skies,  
Of eves that soothe, and mornings that make wise,  
Of flames of daylight, and the cool of stars,  
Of all that makes the bird forget the bars ;

These can I pay not, for they dwell in me,  
Soothing wild yearnings all deliciously,  
And raising music and delight of eyes,  
Through dreams and wonder, unto mysteries.

These can I pay not, e'en though change's jars  
Close the sweet streams, and grief bind joy in bars  
E'en though—most blest of all the gifts that be—  
The gods should sing down all my thanks for me

Not e'en if beauty sit, supreme sole Queen,  
O'er the crookt ways wherein my feet have been,  
Whereas she oft seems dead where life grew chill,  
And weary mist hung heavy on the hill, —

Love's pleasance changing into drear gray wold,  
Beaten with rain, while sun and stars were cold,  
Whence gathered, oftimes, was the wood, while green;  
That burns with no sweet breath, or certain sheen.

So hap be found one bud by way or rill,  
Light its wan face, and yield it your goodwill,  
That grateful sisters, ere it grow gray-old,  
May dare lift timid heads above the mould.

To all the warm hearts that I have not known,  
To gentle hands that have not touched mine own,  
To golden curls that pillow on the page,  
To critic brows, and the wise ways of age,

Greeting of verses, that would ask no more,  
Than one Godspeed to aid me up the shore,  
Where seas are surging, by strange breezes blown,  
And paths shine faint through shingle and rough stone

One grasp of hand, ere I return to wage  
My little part of fight, my lyric rage ;  
So ye well-willing influence outpour,  
Love's road is rosy, and uphill no more.



## NOTES.

**PYGMALION.** At the date when this poem was made (1866), I was unaware of the existence of any English rendering of the legend. Those who may be curious in such comparisons, can however, now, refer to the following authors who treat of the same subject.

John Marston. Library of Old English Authors.

Thomas Lovell Beddoes. Pickering, 1851.

Robert Buchanan. "Undertones." Strahan and Co., 1865.

J. Mew. "Once a Week." March 9th, 1867.

William Morris. "Earthly Paradise." F. S. Ellis, 1868.

By Beddoes and Morris the legend is so tenderly and sweetly conceived, that, had I earlier seen their versions, I should never have dared, or had room, myself, to attempt one.

**A REVERIE AT NIGHT.** "The stars 'speak silence':" this perfect metaphor is not of my vision;—I could not dispel it. It is from the address "To the Evening Star," by William Blake:—

"Speak silence with thy glimmering eyes,  
And wash the dusk with silver."

**BLONDELL DE LA NESLE.** Trouvère; a minstrel, troubadour or knight-poet.  
Servente:—"a piece for one performer"; Tenson:—"a duet between two."

**THE FLOWER OF TRYST.** This is the only reprint in the volume, having appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine of January, 1869.

**ESSEX AND THE RING.** Mary Marven;—this character is not strictly historical. The name of Lady Marven, or Marvyn, however, appears several times in lists of new year's gifts to and from the queen. See Nichol's Progresses of Qu: Eliz: vol. I., pp. 116, 125; II., 73, 86, 256, 268.

QUEEN SYMPATHY. The English of the quotations :—

Join cups, and make merry thy youth with me,  
Give loving for love, and twine chaplets for me and for thee ;  
Share frolics of mine that are mad and gay,  
And I will be wise in thy wisdom's way.

We piped unto ye, and ye danced not :  
Dirges we wailed to ye, and, for grief, ye did not beat your breasts.

Not mine to hate with them that hate, but with them that love, to love.

A GREEK LOVE-SONG (from Sappho). This translation is put forth in fear and trembling, as possibly adding another to the several already existing libels upon the original. I once deemed it of all poems the most difficult to reproduce, but in Mr. D. G. Rossetti's "Early Italian Poets" I find some—one in particular, entitled, I think, "Sestina"—which, for the change of tongue, even in mediocre accomplishment, must have required more both of patience and ability ; and the doing of which, perfectly, could only have been achieved by such rare power and culture as are possessed by him.

EX ÆNTRO.

With "Ye find the taste of having others damned  
Sweet on the palate, so but safe yourselves."

Conf. "Suave, mare magno turbantibus æquora ventis,  
E terrâ magnum alterius spectare laborem." Lucretius II. I.

With "The growth of music in the tuneless lyre ; etc., etc."

Conf. the motto on the title page, for which see Plato. Critias.

Whilst reading the last work by the author of "Festus," I noted a slight similarity to some lines which I had put to paper, shortly before, in this. See "Universal Hymn," pp. 40, ll. 13 : 45, 18 : 50, 2. This reference I make to avoid the possibility of appearing in the rather hackneyed serio-comediæta of "Plagiarism Exposed."

In this poem, as well as in many others, I will not answer for the melody or delightfulness of some of the lines. Some thoughts are not conceived or suggested musically, and herein perhaps have I erred against my own laws, and am declared heretic by my own preface. If so, it is the fault of the tendency of the age ; not mine. Let me however, here, make special reference

to the words in the preface as to auto-biography and the revelation of (to use an old word) egoity. Here, too, with respect to metre, I must make a general protest against the bonds of some of the "minute" critics. In a London paper of recent date now before me, I find objection raised to some perfectly musical blank-verses, with a bastard iambic in the third place, and hence containing eleven syllables in numeration, but without the time or character of the rhythm being affected otherwise than rightly. The reviewer in question proceeds to state that "in *our* time, blank verse used to have ten and not eleven *feet*"!

SONG. FAIRYLAND. This was made for the air of the "Confederate" war-song "My Maryland," which is now silent. I had less compunction about borrowing the rhythm, as the air, I am told, was well known in Germany long before the date of the American Civil War.

THE WORLD BEFORE MAN. This must excuse itself as being an impromptu. The subject was suggested by a friend, with an allowance of half-an-hour for the "manufacture" of the verses.

"PURPOSE AND PASSION." I am indebted to a paragraph, in Edgar Poe's preface to his poems, for the actual words of this volume's title, which is both specially intelligible with reference to the development of the poem "Pygmalion," and has also some general interpretation in the work itself.

At the risk of appearing immodest, I cannot refrain from quoting, in illustration, the words of one whom I, and many others, hold in reverence. "Your Pygmalion has interested me greatly, and has given me many hints about the link between the ideal and the real, and how the pursuit of that which *appears* to be a creation of ours, may become a passion. It is a very deep subject, deeper than I can fathom. You seem to me have approached it reverently, and yet with a glowing sympathy." The subject must justify my bringing in these words, and I will bear the blame, for the sake of the illumination thrown by them upon the strange dim bordering-land of sleep and shadow, of which we know so little, of which we dream—perhaps, to which we owe—so much.

JARROLD AND SONS, PRINTERS, NORWICH.







